



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 7 2017/2018



BANFF & BUCHAN - BANFF TOWN CENTRE



MARR - CRAIGIEVAR CASTLE



FORMARTINE - TURRIFF TOWN CENTRE



BUCHAN - PETERHEAD MARINA



GARIOCH - INVERURIE TOWN CENTRE



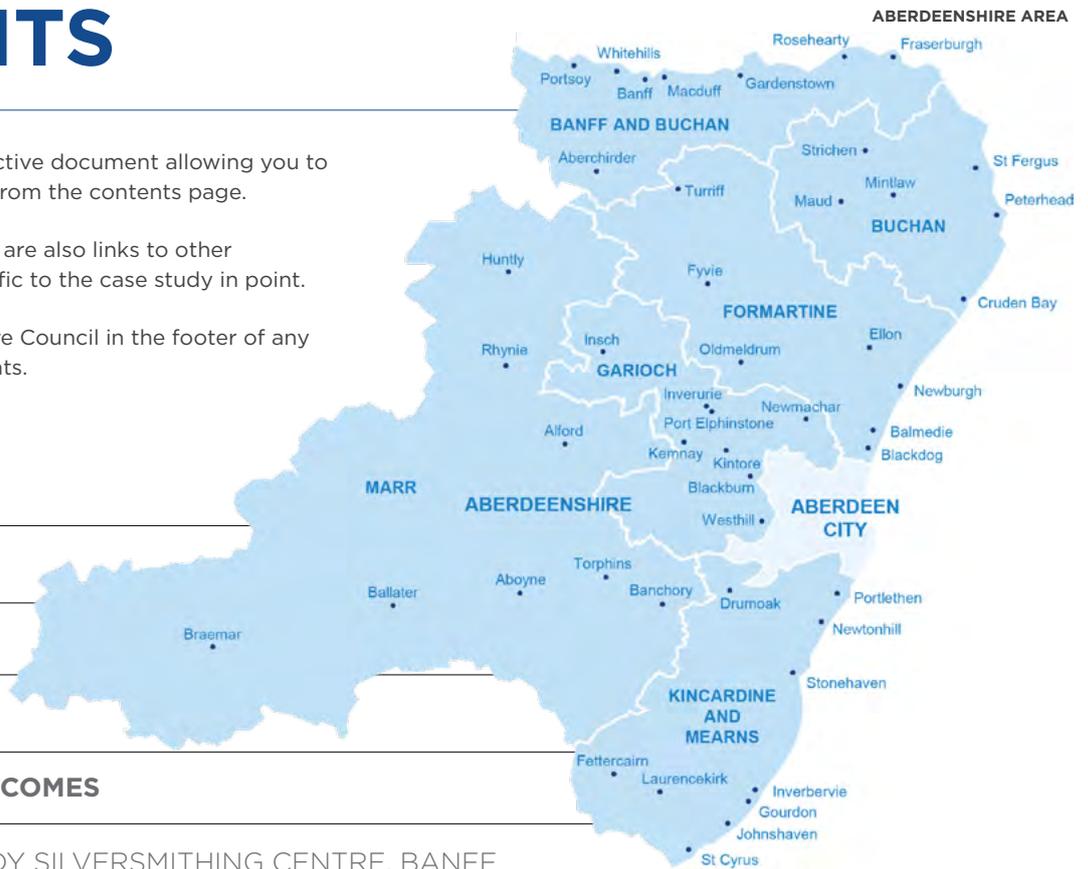
KINCARDINE & MEARNS - STONEHAVEN HARBOUR

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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

Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Service continues that central role of supporting and steering development and associated investment across The Shire. The environment in which the Service works and indeed the whole Public Sector – continues to evolve. There are always degrees of uncertainty, change and challenge with the need to manage the development requisites as they come forward. Workload remains towards the higher end of Scottish Councils with just under 3000 planning applications received in 2017/18. This will equate to circa £500m of development spend, which contributes to the local economy.



The environment in which Planning Services is working continues to change. The economy is improving but should be regarded at the weaker end of the scale. Financial pressures across all Sectors affects decision making and investment whilst complexity remains. Planning Services are about enhancing those Communities of Aberdeenshire – it is that focus and connectivity – investment and development that creates housing / job opportunity / positive fit within the Place – maintaining and enhancing that positive impact on those who live, work and visit Aberdeenshire.

Planning Services continue to pursue engagement with stakeholders – developers, Agents, communities, agencies and other partners. This promotes understanding in the requisites from the Planning perspective and also what the challenges are, being experienced by partners. This facilitates

a smoother and quicker process and assists in that expectation management. Challenging sites can be reviewed, and solutions brokered and positive efforts continue with cognisance to economic activity and investment. All about creating a Development Management process that is as inclusive and engaged as can be, accepting that not every issue can be managed to a positive outcome for all.

The environment of Aberdeenshire is key to the Planning approach – supporting a sustainable approach to development and change, ensuring that climate / carbon footprint and so health in the broadest sense is an integral part of the outcomes of the endeavours of the Planning Services.

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.

In November 2017 Aberdeenshire Council agreed the Council Plan. This 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 centered 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 socio-economic 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 2017/18

SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING YEAR

Aberdeenshire Council adopted the [Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan](#) on 17 April 2017.

We are currently working on the [Local Development Plan 2021](#). To find information on our progress read the [Local Development Plan 2021 briefing note](#).



SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT YEAR

The emphasis on performance improvement and retention of performance has continued throughout the PPF reporting year.

Improvement has been recorded overall with the areas of concern from last reporting period showing the benefits of focus and implementation of improvement projects. Work continues to maintain performance in all categories and on continuous improvement. The economic conditions continue to impact on the north east in a variety of ways, but this also includes areas of potential upturn, with a slight slowdown in the reduction of applications received. Staff resourcing and capacity has continued to be reviewed and monitored to ensure adequate resources are directed to the areas of pressure and need, with cognisance to maintaining high levels of service delivery and performance.

Staff development remains an important part of an effective and efficient service with development management responding to periods of pressure and areas of need in other parts of the service (Delivery, Policy and Enforcement) through secondments with benefits flowing in both directions.

[The Development Management Charter](#), published in 2015, is considered to be fit for purpose and the intention is to update as part of the future Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.

SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT YEAR

The Enforcement year has been a challenging one balancing the day to day operational needs of the Service with the need to seek out improved ways of working to become more effective in what we do. The need for transparency and certainty in decision making continues to be an ongoing improvement for the Enforcement Team.

In the previous period, the Team reported on the positive work that had been undertaken as a result of the audit of planning enforcement in 2016/17 which put in place a clear enforcement process and a series of procedures, which along with the Enforcement Charter, provided a strong framework for planning enforcement decision making. Building on this work, the Team have now begun a review of the process and procedures which have become embedded into day to day working practices to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. This work is ongoing and will continue into the next reporting period.

The Team continues to work on a number of [improvement initiatives](#), some continuing commitments, some new commitments, and improvements undertaken where an opportunity arose to do things better. This work reflects Aberdeenshire's commitment to improving performance and the quality of services it provides.

In terms of performance, the period continued to be a busy one for planning enforcement with Aberdeenshire Council remaining in the top 3 busiest Planning Authorities in Scotland in terms of the number of enforcement complaints received. The total number received had fallen from 546 to 457 since the previous period, which most likely reflected the drop in planning application activity in the period, along with continuing efforts to filter out non-enforcement complaints being investigated and taking up resources that could be better used elsewhere. However, the drop in the day to day operational case work provided an opportunity to review processes and procedures and identify where improvements could be undertaken. The work continued to be varied in nature and scale with the majority of breaches being resolved without recourse to formal action. [The Planning Enforcement Charter](#), published in 2017, is up to date and due for review in 2019.

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 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 has been and will continue to be an important part of our activity. We have been reviewing some of our processes to make sure we add value and meet customer needs. Following the successful drawdown of Historic Environment Scotland, Heritage Lottery and other external funding, small regeneration projects have been completed and major projects are well underway. Spend across the built and natural environment is better evidenced by asset management and prioritisation processes in relation to access and historic assets. The majority of our work is supported by completed strategies and action plans, with on-going work in this area, to ensure alignment with national and corporate priorities and that our activities make the best use of resources available.

PERFORMANCE MARKERS – PRIORITY FOCUS FROM 2016-2017 FEEDBACK SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FOR 2017-18

The priority focus comes from the Feedback of the previous PPF (2016/17) 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 2017/18 FROM FEEDBACK 2016/17

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	OUTCOMES	PRIORITY - GREEN	OUTCOMES
Driving Improved Performance				
Decision Making	Major Applications – improvement in timescales but still above the national average	Further improvement recorded now 29.5 average weeks. Assisted by use of PPA's and improvements in the timescales of legal agreements.	Non-householder applications	Retained focus on improving average weeks – now
Legal Agreements	Timescales for major applications with legal agreements have improved by over 35 weeks to 125 weeks, however they remain more than twice as slow as the Scottish average. Local applications have improved considerably by 30 weeks and at 15 weeks are faster than the Scottish average.	Further improvements in timescales for the reporting period. Implementation of many of the elements of the improvement projects but with recognition of further improvement work between the Planning and Legal services.		
Project Management	You continue to demonstrate your commitment to improving timescales for concluding legal agreements and we note an improvement project is in place.	As above with work on going on the joint improvement project.	Processing Agreements (PPA)	Monitoring of use of PPA's with focus on reviewing usage.

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	OUTCOMES	PRIORITY - GREEN	OUTCOMES
Promoting the Plan-Led System				
Development Plan Scheme	Development Plan Scheme sets out the timetable for key stages in replacing the LDP. The method of how timescales are adhered to has not been outlined	Timescales are all project managed and this is demonstrated throughout the reporting year.		
Delivering Development				
Stalled sites/ legacy/cases	<p>Whilst 61 cases were cleared during the period, 43 remain in place, the same as the previous year. It is clear that new legacy cases are continuing to be created.</p> <p>The protocol with legal services is noted and we would hope this will make an impact on the figures next year</p>	<p>Whilst new cases were created, work was focused on minimising new legacy cases through close monitoring, the appropriate use of PPA's, and further collaborative work with the Legal Service on prevention in addition to working with applicants and developers.</p>		



PERFORMANCE MARKERS - PRIORITY FOCUS FOR 2017/18

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	PRIORITY - GREEN
Decision Making	Reduction of average timescales for Major Development.	
Legal Agreements		<p>Improvement Project commenced, increased collaboration with Legal Services on Section 75 processes.</p> <p>Continue focus on improving timescales for Section 75 conclusions.</p>
Stalled Sites/Legacy cases	Focus has remained on legacy prevention. The use of processing agreements has increased, and this has assisted in dealing with new legacy cases.	

(Refer to Part 3A Service Improvements for 2017-18)

PART 1: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

HERITAGE WAY, FRASERBURGH



PORTSOY CONSERVATION AREA



QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

Focus on quality and added value continued in various guises throughout the reporting year. Maintaining and improving high quality design and development through regeneration of the old and innovation of the new reflected the aims of the Local Development Plan in maintaining a high quality of life through, amongst other elements, successful, sustainable places and high-quality development on the ground.

The following case studies demonstrate the diversity of activity and performance delivery by all parts of the planning service. These have resulted in outcomes reflecting not only the aims of the Local Development Plan but adding value through alignment with the Council's priorities and inter disciplinary working across Services.

CASE STUDY 1 – THE SMIDDY SILVERSMITHING CENTRE, BANFF

LOCATION AND DATES:

The Smiddy (also known as the Meal House), Old Market Place, Banff 2017-2018

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 customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Community Groups



THE SMIDDY, BEFORE RESTORATION

OVERVIEW:

Restoration of derelict Category B Listed former Smiddy/Meal house to create a centre/workshop for silversmithing as part of a wider programme of regeneration projects and other creative and cultural activity to develop Banff as a creative place. **The project** is an example of what can be achieved through collaboration

with a local heritage group, and joint working with other Council Services including Economic Development and the Art Development Team.

GOALS:

The property was identified as a priority project in the [Banff Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme \(CARS\)](#) which

is part of a wider programme of **regeneration activity** in Aberdeenshire's 4 Towns programme which is a key part of the **Council's Regeneration Strategy**. The Planning Service leads on the Council's conservation, enhancement and promotion of Aberdeenshire's built heritage, manages Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes and managed this project. The building is a common good asset managed by the Council.

OUTCOMES:

- Successful collaboration between: a community group, the **Banff Preservation and Heritage Society**, who commissioned the original feasibility study with CARS funding; the **Economic Development Service** who provided support for funding bids and, the Council's Art Development team who provided advice in finding a tenant for the building.
- Successful funding bids for CARS and Scottish Regeneration Capital Grant funding.
- Restoration and re-use of a derelict Listed building which was on the **Buildings at Risk Register**.
- Enhancement of the **Banff Conservation Area** and the **town centre** as a place to visit and live.
- Opportunity to revive silversmithing in Banff - the restored building is to be leased to Vanilla Ink jewellery school who are obtaining funding to fit out the building as a silversmithing workshop to provide training to silversmithing students/graduates and visitors. It is hoped the workshop will open in September.
- Providing a facility to add to the existing creative offering in Banff helping to raise the towns profile and attract visiting students and tourists, with the associated economic benefits.
- Providing a link to the existing museum collection of local silverwork at Banff Museum and exhibition/event opportunities at **Duff House**.
- The wider programme of regeneration works included improvements to the **Banff Museum** to increase exhibition space and improve accessibility.
- A potential catalyst for other associated developments, including accommodation for students and visitors, which could deliver additional economic and social benefits.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Debbie Burroughs, Environment Team Leader



THE SMIDDY, INTERIOR



THE SMIDDY, COMPLETED

DELIVERY TEAM

CASE STUDY 2 – BRIDGE STREET, BANFF REGENERATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Bridge Street, Banff
June 2016 - Ongoing through reporting period - 2017-18

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 customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

Following on from the [Bridge Street and Deveronside Regeneration Options Appraisal](#) which was welcomed by Elected Members at Banff and Buchan Area Committee on 28th March 2017, the Planning Information & Delivery Team (PIDT) is leading a design project for [street scene improvements](#) along Bridge Street. Officers have been working with private sector consultants for the design work for Bridge Street, as well as redeveloping the car park at the rear of Bridge Street and improving connections through to the car park.

The PIDT are coordinating the detailed designs with relevant colleagues from planning, roads development, flood prevention, car parking, lighting and roads policy at regular project team meetings. Cross Service working is also evident with the Transportation Strategy Team in relation to placing a new Electric Vehicle charging point in the car park coinciding with the redevelopment works.



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 and make it more attractive for businesses, visitors and residents and is part of a multi-faceted approach to regeneration involving Planning, [CARS funding](#) and Economic Development.

OUTCOMES:

As the technical issues were understood and addressed, several concept designs were presented to the Banff Town Team and then to Local Councillors to gather feedback and inform a final design. The vision behind the project remains:

“To regenerate Bridge Street and bring life to the surrounding area by increasing connectivity, improving the public realm and introducing a new destination point within the lower Banff area”.



The final design is currently being prepared by HFM Architects and Fairhurst and will be presented to the Area Committee in the coming months.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kirsty Black, Project Officer

CASE STUDY 3 – 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 outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

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:

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

OVERVIEW:

[The Macduff Property Grant Scheme](#) is the first of many interventions planned through the [Macduff Development Partnership Vision and Action Plan](#), which focuses on the regeneration of the town centre over the next 5 years. The scheme focused 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 and improve the quality of the built environment.

Delivery Officers from the 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 Delivery Officers then conducted a site visit to the grant area to identify any priority buildings which should be targeted through the scheme. Letters were then drafted and issued to the owners of the properties to encourage external building improvements highlighting the works that Officers were seeking to be completed.

As the scheme was aimed at improving the visual appeal of Macduff, it was therefore focused on the areas of the buildings that are seen, i.e. fronting the road. 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 up 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.

GOALS:

The Macduff Property Grant Scheme is the first of many interventions planned through the Macduff Development Partnership Vision and Action Plan, which focuses on the regeneration of the town centre over the next 5 years. The scheme focused 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 and improve the quality of the built environment.

OUTCOMES:

The end date for applications was the end of August 2017, where at this point Delivery and Regeneration Officers assessed the applications which had been received which involved further site visits to the properties. Applications were assessed on whether there would be a positive impact upon the appearance of the buildings and 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.

The scheme was a real success and was oversubscribed in terms of applications for the initial £100k budget. Works are currently ongoing to improve the appearance of a number of buildings which will significantly enhance the area.

In future it is possible that the scheme will be extended, and applications included for properties initially unsuccessful and further work will be done to secure improvements to other buildings including use of other planning and enforcement powers.

This scheme is an excellent example of different Services working together with a positive outcome.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

All Delivery Officers



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

CASE STUDY 4: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2017-18: MASTERPLANNING REVIEW – COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

2017 - Ongoing

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:

6 - Continuous improvements - show progress/improvement 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:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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



OVERVIEW:

The Review of Masterplanning has been a committed Service improvement in the last two PPF's. Whilst this Review remains a priority for the Planning Service, it is also intrinsically linked with a number of other Service improvement projects. During 2017 and early 2018 the Review was put on hold while resources were focused on progressing the Pre-Application Process Review which was considered to be an over-arching project to which Masterplanning would fit into and relate with. It had not been possible to resource additional staff to the Masterplanning Review and therefore the work was put on hold for most the 2017-18 period while other work took priority.

GOALS:

Undertaking a Review of the Masterplanning process demonstrates the culture of continuous improvement Aberdeen Council has adopted, through recognising weaknesses in the current process and embarking on an exercise to improve it.

The Review aims to improve the quality of masterplan documents and ultimately, improve the standard of built developments and placemaking in Aberdeenshire. This would be achieved alongside and through establishing, maintaining and improving working relationships with developers, designers and stakeholders within the process.

OUTCOMES:

It was agreed in late March 2018 to recommence work on the Masterplanning Review due to the work on the Pre-Application Review being put on hold pending the outcome of the Planning Bill and thereby allowing staff resources to progress this work.

The work undertaken on the Pre-Application Review will however set out a broad framework for the Masterplanning process to operate within and so some limited progress has been made over the Reporting period by virtue of this related work.

Research and steps already taken on Masterplanning will be updated and picked up where necessary. The main steps undertaken previously fed into the preparation of updated guidance to be used by Planners involved in the process. The guidance was to identify good practice procedures to help facilitate the process of considering and agreeing masterplans as well as focusing on what should be present in a good masterplan. Examples of where the process has worked well were identified across Aberdeenshire and neighbouring Authorities and the lessons learned from these examples will be fed into the guidance. This data can be reviewed and amended to fit within the broader structure of the Pre-Application Review where relevant elements have already been progressed to a sufficient level, this can then be integrated with the Masterplanning process in order to offer a better structure and consequently a higher chance of buy-in and success.

Further consultation will be undertaken with users of the service in autumn 2018 which will build on the consultation and benchmarking carried out with user groups previously and a set of recommendations for improvement reported to Management by the end of 2018.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Elizabeth Tully, Planning Officer

CASE STUDY 5: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2017-18: DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing 2017 & 2018

Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to:

- Quality of outcomes
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment

- Greenspace
- Masterplanning
- Process Improvement
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Placemaking
- Place Standard
- Development Management Processes

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Area Committees/Elected Members
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- External Professionals (Panel Members)
- Developers

OVERVIEW:

Historically Aberdeenshire Council has participated in a Joint Design Panel with Aberdeen City Council reviewing major developments and masterplans. Due to a fall in the number of projects going in front of the Design Panel it was considered an opportune time to review the Council's participation in the process and the process itself.

The Review has involved exploratory discussions with Aberdeen City Council to gauge whether the existing Panel could be reformed in some way to meet the needs and desired outcomes of both Authorities, however the differing natures of the Authority areas led to differing visions for the Panel.

The search for an alternative approach included a Review of other Design Panels within Scotland to identify those which have been successful, and to identify alternative approaches to those which the Planning Service has used before. At this stage other means of assessment were also considered, such as the Place Standard and Moray Council's Placemaking Quality Audit.

The Review has resulted in the development of a new Design Review process for use at the pre-application stage. This comprises a Design Quality Audit (DQA) as the first stage, followed by a review by an external specialist Panel as the second stage. Applicants/developers will be asked to review the design/layout of their development by using the DQA tool. Any issues identified through use of the DQA or the Design Panel should be addressed when the application is submitted, either through amendments to the design or an explanation in the Design Statement. The Design Review process aims to improve the quality of design through early intervention and encouraging a design led approach to development.

GOALS:

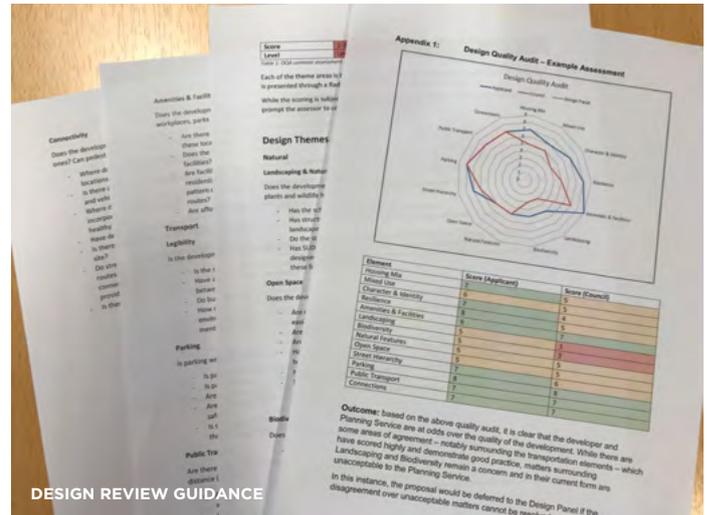
To consider whether the Joint Design Panel remains an appropriate way in which to improve the quality of design within Aberdeenshire.

To identify an alternative means of reviewing design.

OUTCOMES:

The outcome of the Review has resulted in the development of a Design Quality Audit, which seeks to promote a design led approach to development, through prompting applicants to question and consider their design approach. A key element of the scheme is early engagement with the Planning Service and technical consultees, and the early identification of design issues.

The process sits within our existing Major Application Meeting process, and therefore recognises the interdisciplinary nature of good design and encourages collaborative working and skill sharing.



The new process has been reported to the Infrastructure Services Committee. Work remains ongoing in order to ensure appropriate guidance is put in place for Developers, Planning Service Staff and Panel Members. The specialist Panel is yet to be agreed in terms of Panel Members and administration. A DQA pilot scheme is expected to take place in Spring / Summer 2018 in order to further refine and develop the process ahead of a wider roll out later in 2018.



NAME OF KEY OFFICER
James Hewitt, Planning Officer

CASE STUDY 6: ENABLING RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FASQUE HOUSE, FETTERCAIRN, ABERDEENSHIRE

LOCATION AND DATES:

Fasque House, Fettercairn

Application determined by committee and decision issued – March 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 customer outputs and services for customer benefit.

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Benefitting from Planning Permission in Principle for enabling development in relation to the refurbishment of the Category A-listed Fasque House near Fettercairn, an application came forward at the end of 2016 seeking approval of Matters Specified in Conditions (MSC) for the majority of the development site (Zones 3 to 8) APP/2016/3282. Two MSC applications for Zones 1 to 2 had been previously approved. The proposal was for the erection of 74 dwellinghouses, visitors centre, café, farm shop, holiday units, and roads associated infrastructure and landscaping within these zones within the wider Fasque Estate. A separate application for Full Planning Permission for the erection of an equestrian centre was submitted in tandem APP/2016/3284, along with two other applications for replacement houses and a house extension.

Extensive engagement and collaborative working with the applicant's various agents and other stakeholders, at pre-application stage and throughout the detailed assessment of the application, including through the Committee processes, resulted in a development design solution that is considered to be high in quality in terms of place-making especially within its sensitive setting. Ultimately a recommendation for approval was made to the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee - (6 February 2018). After considerable debate, a Committee site visit, and some further amendments to the proposal, the recommendation of approval was supported and the decision issued in March 2018.



GOALS:

Given the scale and sensitivity of the development, it was considered essential to engage closely and regularly with the applicant's agents and other stakeholders. Continuous and constructive engagement in the form of pre-application advice was provided to the various agents dealing with the application for a period of approximately 6-12 months prior to the submission of the application. An action plan was established from the outset, setting out meeting dates and action points. This early engagement formed the basis for constructive discussions through a variety of communication methods, and open and collaborative working with relevant stakeholders. Written feedback was always provided by the Planning Case Officer to ensure accurate and up to date recording of discussions.

This extensive process of engagement and collaborative working proved to be highly beneficial as it allowed for negotiation regarding the masterplan layout, design principles and technical matters to occur prior to the submission of the applications. Throughout the application assessment process, development management staff continued to undertake consistent and

collaborative engagement with the goal of achieving the high-quality design outcome that the Local Development Plan policies inherently seek.



OUTCOMES:

This is an example of how effective engagement with pre-application advice and ongoing discussions led to the approval of a high quality large scale development in a sensitive historic site.

The engagement and negotiation process was considered to significantly enhance the design proposal in terms of its layout, and its finish and appearance, and address existing built and natural heritage sensitivities. Early and effective engagement with key design consultees, including Historic Environment Scotland and the Council's Infrastructure Services (Environment) Team, was worthwhile as it improved the design offering in the historic setting, striking an appropriate balance between protection and enhancement of a historic asset.

Specifically, elements of the proposal which were improved through the constructive dialogue included seeking specification of material samples, reconfiguration of site layouts and the retention and conversion of vernacular buildings, amongst other things.

Further outcomes included outlining required information to be submitted with the applications prior to submission. This fed into the agreed planning processing agreement which was adhered to and amended accordingly throughout the progress of the application. Continuous open discussion between the applicant/agent and the Planning Service, and the agreement of timescales, resulted in a managed process throughout the application assessment period which ultimately resulted in a positive outcome.

The attached testimony from the primary agent reflects the quality of this process of engagement and contribution to high quality design carried out by the Development Management Team.

"We have been working with Aberdeenshire Council on an

application for approval of Matters Specified in Conditions for the Fasque House Estate, Fettercairn. The site is sensitive with the Estate noted as "designed landscape" and several of the buildings within it are listed. The proposed development is mixed use and includes: 74 new dwellings, conversion of an existing steading, creation of a farm shop (produce, gallery, studio and visitor's centre), café and associated landscape and infrastructure. The architecture and landscape have been developed in tandem to produce bespoke designs for the site. The project has therefore been complex, and we had several pre-application meetings with the Planning Department. We have found the Planning Officers to be approachable, friendly and professional with a very good understanding of the pertinent issues surrounding the site. At each meeting, they made the sure the appropriate representatives attended which meant we received clear advice each time on how to progress designs and they quickly grasped our design intent making informed and helpful suggestions. Emphasis was always placed first and foremost on the quality of design and placemaking in our discussions.

Following submission of the application, enquiries for further information and responses by the Case Officer have always been dealt with promptly and in a highly organised fashion. There has been a considerable amount of information produced for this project and the Case Officer has gone out of her way to assist us in streamlining and simplifying information exchanges wherever possible.

Throughout the preparation for the Planning Committee, the planning officers have been consistent and thorough, unwavering from their original recommendation for approval and where necessary have pointed out to the planning committee the clear procedures that have taken place during the process.

In summary dealing with the planning officers in this instance has felt like a collaborative process to ensure the best possible design solutions have been produced for the site and successful permissions achieved."

Optimised Environments Ltd
26.03.18

NAME OF KEY OFFICERS

Jane Weir, Planner, Development Management

CASE STUDY 7: KINCARDINE O'NEIL AULD KIRK

LOCATION AND DATES:

Kincardine O'Neil Old Church, Kincardine O'Neil - April - November 2018

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

Kincardine O'Neil Old Church is a Scheduled Monument which is a prominent landmark within the village. Surveys highlighted that cement pointing undertaken about 25 years ago was failing in a number of areas, resulting in stone deterioration, loose masonry and voids in the walls. Works were carried out to remove the cement with hand tools, and to replace it with an appropriate lime mortar. Rough capping was introduced to the wall heads to encourage rainwater to run away from the building rather than pooling and deteriorating the mortar as it had previously.

This project illustrates the Service's commitment to improved management of historic assets. The works will ensure the Kirk's continued survival as one of Aberdeenshire's Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Lessons learned from the implementation of the project will be used in the development of similar schemes on other sites.

The project included a new interpretation board and a **small event** was organised with the local community and school to mark the completion of the successful repair works.

GOALS:

The Planning Service leads on the Council's conservation, enhancement and promotion of Aberdeenshire's built heritage. Repair of the structure was identified as a priority in the Service's **Historic Asset Management Project**, which is part of the Service's commitment to improving the management of assets. The Service managed and funded the project to secure its future as an asset for the community and visitors.

OUTCOMES:

Successful repair and restoration of a Scheduled Ancient

Monument which was at risk of collapse.

A safe environment for visitors to the Kirk.

Enhancement of the **Kincardine O'Neil Conservation Area**.

Improved interpretation for residents and visitors.

Collaboration between Environment, Archaeology and Landscape Services' staff and Historic Environment Scotland to agree the best way to repair and restore the structure. Sharing of experience and knowledge for future projects.

Enhanced awareness of the history of the Kirk and the importance of the project in the local community.

Learning experience for local stonemason which will inform approach on similar projects.



NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Frances Swanston, Environment Planner

CASE STUDY 8: EXAMPLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKING IN ACHIEVING QUALITY OUTCOMES FOR PLANNING: A TESTIMONIAL FROM A PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

LOCATION AND DATES:

Based in Inverurie, operating across Aberdeenshire - 2017 & 2018

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

- Quality of Outcome
- Governance

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Enforcement
- Staff Training
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

The following is a testimonial from a Planning Enforcement Officer which highlights the interdisciplinary and collaborative working undertaken as part of the role.



"I joined Aberdeenshire Council in 2008 as a Licensing Standards Officer (LSO), a newly created post under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Having worked as an LSO for 6 years I began looking for opportunities to extend my experience and skill set. In August 2014 an opportunity arose to join a newly restructured and centrally located Planning Enforcement

Team. I saw the role of Planning Enforcement Officer as a natural progression of my work as a Licensing officer which had itself involved elements of enforcement activity to ensure compliance with the licensing laws. Initially I worked within a small team of 4 which to date has expanded to 5 Officers and 2 Senior Planners. The work is extremely varied and covers a large geographical area (6,313 km², 4th largest in Scotland). It is because of the size of the area and the diverse development opportunities this provides, that on any given day a Planning Enforcement Officer can be asked to investigate breaches on a wide variety of planning issues, ranging from the large scale/ more complex or technical in nature such as wind turbines, quarrying, waste disposal, advertising, gypsy traveller sites, housing developments, listed buildings, access matters to more minor issues relating to domestic scale breaches.

Effective planning enforcement requires resilience, adaptability and a breadth of knowledge covering subjects not necessarily limited to planning law. A Planning Enforcement Officer must wear many hats. At all times he/she is part planner, environmental health officer, roads engineer, architect, surveyor, lawyer, police officer, mediator as well as countless other roles as the exigencies of the service require. To be able to do this has required me to learn new skills and gain insights into the workings of not only the Local Authority and its many services but also the external partner agencies who often feed into the planning system through the development management process. Although any given case may involve several agencies/ services, many of whom have a larger stake or interest in the outcome, more often than not these agencies/services defer to the planning enforcement officer to take the lead role in bringing these interested parties together, liaising between all and securing the desired outcome. Collaborative working is one of the key components of the role.

Planning enforcement should first and foremost be corrective not punitive. Planning is a permissive regime and Planning Enforcement do not need to immediately jump to formal enforcement action when negotiation will do. Therefore, the ability to simultaneously negotiate, engage, lead, work with developers, interested services/ technical agencies, and the public in often challenging and confrontational circumstances is a key skill and vital part of effective enforcement".

GOALS:

Properly functioning planning enforcement is central to providing an effective development management process that inspires confidence in the public. When breaches of planning control occur, it is recognised that as part of an effective and improving development management system, a well-resourced, well trained and effective planning enforcement regime is required to instil public confidence in the planning system.

OUTCOMES:

The Case Study highlights the importance of collaborative and interdisciplinary working in the role of an Enforcement Officer.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Robin Currie, Planning Enforcement Officer

DEVELOPER OBLIGATIONS

CASE STUDY 9: ALIGNING THE COUNCIL PLAN, LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND CAPITAL PLAN

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various - Headquarters and local offices throughout 2017/18

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:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

This project has enabled the Council to identify infrastructure capacity, the need for investment and timescale for delivery. Historically the absence of this information has impacted on the Council's ability to allocate development ready land within the Local Development Plan leading to the allocation of constrained sites. It is anticipated that alignment between the [Local Development Plan](#), the [Capital Plan](#) and [Council Plan](#) shall facilitate development delivery and the allocation of development ready land. This work has led to the creation of a Future Infrastructure Database that enables the Developer Obligations Team to evidence the relationship between new development and the need to mitigate its impact on infrastructure.

GOALS:

The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan guides development to the most appropriate location within the Authority's administrative area. In doing so, the Local Development Plan aligns itself with the Council Plan which outlines the organisations aims and objectives. However, to ensure that the infrastructure required to deliver development on allocated sites within the Local Development Plan there also has to be alignment with the Council's Capital Plan. The Capital Plan details the infrastructure projects that the Council is committed to delivering within a given time.

A common factor impacting the delivery of development on sites allocated by Local Development Plans is infrastructure capacity. To address this issue the Developer Obligations, Delivery and Local Development Plan Teams have begun mapping the capacity of existing infrastructure delivered by the Council and sharing this information as well as proposals to allocate land through the Local Development Plan process with Council Services. Council Services are then able to prioritise the delivery of infrastructure through the Council's Capital Plan within areas of growth created by Local Development Plan land allocations.

OUTCOMES:

This process, although at an early stage in its development, has resulted in the creation of a Future Infrastructure Database that outlines current infrastructure capacity along with a timeline for investment and delivery of additional infrastructure required because of development. Although in its infancy this database shall be used to evidence the need for contributions to be secured by the Developer Obligations Team towards the delivery of infrastructure in Aberdeenshire.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Paul Macari, Principal Developer Obligations Officer

QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

The importance of engagement and high-quality delivery is never underestimated. The reporting year has retained focus on excellent communication and engagement. The year has seen the adoption of the **Local Development Plan 2017** and evidence of its immediate implementation and delivery can be seen in the following case studies.

The 'One Aberdeenshire' approach has proven effective in the delivery of developments and projects where joint working and collaboration has been the key to high quality delivery and supporting sustainable economic growth within the north-east.

The Customer obviously remains the key to gauging the quality of outcomes and performance in service delivery.

Engagement, collaboration and taking on board feedback is vital to be able to recognise issues, faults and areas requiring improvement. Further case studies in this category highlight where varying levels of communication and engagement have resulted in action and ultimately good outcomes which have been attributed to solution/innovation and mutual understanding.



COUNCIL PRIORITIES – RIGHT PEOPLE, RIGHT PLACES

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

CASE STUDY 10: PLANNING ADVICE 01/2018: SP=EED® – ADVICE FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House, Gordon House and Viewmount (Aberdeenshire Council Offices). Summer 2017 – March 2018

Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to:

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

KEY MARKERS:

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
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Planning Committee

OVERVIEW:

Aberdeenshire Council advocates opportunities to promote best practice across the Planning Service. Having previously had success in applying the principles of **SP=EED** (Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery) in Development Planning.

SP=EED® is a practical guide to engagement in the planning system produced by PAS (formerly Planning Aid Scotland). It is intended to aid the design, delivery and assessment of engagement undertaken with a view to enhancing the overall quality of engagement.

In early 2018, Aberdeenshire Council adopted **non-statutory planning advice** to assist in the application of Policy P1 Layout, siting and design of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 regarding the assessment of “appropriate publication” for major and national developments. SP=EED is used as a tool to measure effective engagement and its application should be demonstrated in Pre-Application Consultation Reports.

GOALS:

To add value in Development Management procedures in terms of pre-application engagement required for major and national developments.

OUTCOMES:

The planning advice was prepared in collaboration with PAS, and Aberdeenshire Council has been commended for pursuing this. Consultation was undertaken with colleagues in Development Management to ensure the guidance could be practically applied. Training for Development Management staff on the application of the planning advice was provided by the Policy Team. Monitoring of the advice note is ongoing as well as there being continued support from the Policy Team.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Ailsa Anderson, Senior Policy Planner

CASE STUDY 11: USING THE PLACE STANDARD TO INFORM THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCATION AND DATES:

October to December 2017 - Various locations across Aberdeenshire (66 meetings held)

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:

- 9 - Elected Member engaged early in development plan preparation
- 10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Town Centres
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Place Standard
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Community Council Representatives

OVERVIEW:

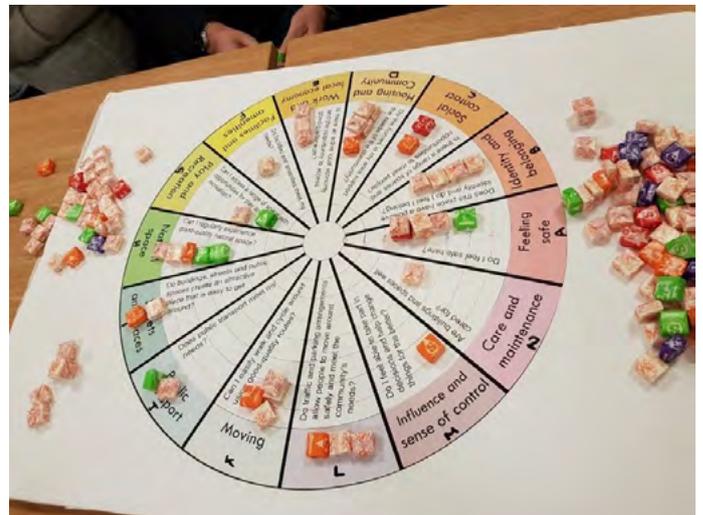
From October to December 2017 the Planning Policy Team worked with Community Planning Officers in the six areas of Aberdeenshire to use the **“Place Standard”** as a means of focussing very early discussion on the **Local Development Plan 2021**. Policy Planners visited 66 Community Councils and, where appropriate, used the Place Standard tool.

GOALS:

To identify what the “main issues” for the community might be. This was used to lead in to a discussion of the best ways in which to resolve issues that were identified.

OUTCOMES:

Community Planning staff also attended these meetings to ensure that non-planning issues were appropriately recorded and could be taken forward into local community action plans. These joint meetings show joint working between the community planning and the land use planning functions which, while requiring significant forward planning, has led to material benefits for both services.



The graphic way in which information was collected, and the use of sweets to record the final performance on the different issues raised ensured that it was a memorable experience for all involved. Following the meetings summaries of the outcomes were presented to each of the 6 Area Committees and used to inform draft settlement statements for the Local Development Plan 2021.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter, Policy Team Leader

CASE STUDY 12: PRODUCTION OF A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN NEWSLETTER

LOCATION AND DATES:

Published Monthly on Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan webpage

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:

9 - Elected Member engaged early in development plan preparation
10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Community Engagement
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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



OVERVIEW:

The Local Development Plan Team have now committed to producing a **monthly “update” newsletter**. In the past a self-subscribing Twitter account has been used to circulate key information on plan progress referred to in the Local Development Plan website. This has had limited success. While this will still be used, the newsletter provides the opportunity for a more informal account to be given of work in progress at the current time. This has been done using the “readymag” platform. A number of readers have commended us on this approach.

GOALS:

To keep interested parties and stakeholders engaged with the process, to raise the profile of the Local Development Plan and improve engagement. To provide the opportunity for a more informal account to be given of work in progress at the current time.

OUTCOMES:

Controls and procedures have been put in place to ensure that those who wish to read the newsletter are given the opportunity to unsubscribe at any time, and an annual confirmation e-mail will be sent out to all subscribers to actively petition whether they still wish to be informed of our work in this way.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter, Policy Team Leader

CASE STUDY 13: PRE-MAIN ISSUES REPORT (MIR) ENGAGEMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House and each of the 6 Aberdeenshire Council area committee venues December 2017 (ongoing).

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

9 - Elected Member engaged early in development plan preparation
10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation
12 - Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment

- Greenspace
- Town Centres
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Project Management
- Transport
- Active Travel
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

To capture the emerging issues that might need to be considered in the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report a series of exercises were conducted with stakeholders from a variety of topic areas. When coupled with informal discussions

with the six Area Committees these have led to a very clear understanding of what has changed since the formulation of the now-adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2017, and where material improvements could be delivered.

Examination of the policies in the plan by the Local Development Plan Team fed into discussions with stakeholders regarding what might now need to change for the emerging plan. Elected Members were given the first opportunity to identify problems that they perceived with the operation of the policies. Economic development, environment, rural development, housebuilding and development representatives all attended their own topic-based meetings. Discussions started on those topics that the team had identified but quickly branched out to new topics on which a land use planning perspective might be required, identifying not only what the issue might be but also what possible solutions could be implemented.

GOALS:

To identify emerging issues that might need to be considered in the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report by early engagement with Elected Members and other stakeholders such as economic development, environment, rural development, housebuilding and development representatives who all attended their own topic-based meetings.

OUTCOMES:

As a final step a “tracked changes” version of the policies in the current plan were developed to represent the first stages of a draft **“Proposed Local Development Plan”**. This will ultimately be published alongside the Main Issues Report as a clear indication of how the “preferred options” will look in the context of a new plan.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter, Policy Team Leader

ENVIRONMENT

CASE STUDY 14: YEAR OF HISTORY, HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY ACTIVITY

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various and online 2017

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

- 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
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Project Management
- Staff Training
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

An extensive social media campaign was run during 2017 by Specialist Services Archaeology Staff, to celebrate the Scottish Government’s **Year of History, Heritage & Archaeology (YHHA)**. This programme covered the four Local Authority areas which the team has responsibility over. For Aberdeenshire, archaeological sites in the region were highlighted on a monthly basis on Twitter and Instagram receiving 1,146 Twitter Engagements (40,815 Impressions), 1,074 Instagram Likes and generating 268 URL link clicks to the Aberdeenshire Sites & Monuments Record. Numerous positive comments were received from the public, generating much discussion and interest, and reaching an audience across 12 countries.

Unique to Aberdeenshire in the YHHA social media programme was a celebration of some of the region’s **“Famous Faces”**. Each month, a different individual was presented; with their story, impact and connection to Aberdeenshire told. This received 520 Twitter Engagements (25,239 Impressions), 495 Instagram Likes and generated 172 url link clicks to the Aberdeenshire Famous Faces web page.



GOALS:

The Planning Service leads on the Council’s promotion of Aberdeenshire’s built heritage and contributes to the promotion of cultural heritage. The Service worked with colleagues in other Services including Museums and Heritage Services, Libraries and Information Services and the City and Shire Archivist to develop a programme of activity to celebrate the YHHA. The social media campaign was part of this programme and sought to showcase the rich and diverse built and cultural heritage of Aberdeenshire.

OUTCOMES:

Raised awareness of rich and diverse cultural heritage of Aberdeenshire by a broad audience. Engagement and interest and by the public in heritage.

Refer to the analysis report of the campaign :

[Archaeological Service Social Media Campaign](#)

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Claire Herbert, Archaeologist

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

CASE STUDY 15: ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING PERFORMANCE 2017-18

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council - March 2017 - March 2018

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes
- 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
- Project Management
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

The emphasis on performance improvement and retention of performance has continued throughout the PPF reporting year. Although a green rating was given on decision making for 2016-17, the overarching improvement required was that of major application decision making and legal agreement timescales given that they remained significantly slower than the Scottish average. A service delivery commitment to improve major application decision making performance remains.

(Case Study 16 – Major Application Performance 2017-18)

The economic impact of the oil/gas downturn has remained an ongoing

and major consideration in organising workloads and resources. Priorities with respect to customer and key stakeholder circumstances in relation to need and demand has continued to be at the forefront of the delivery of the service. The careful balance between performance and outcomes of decision making is a mainstay of delivery with cognisance to the **Council's priorities**.

Application numbers reduced by 253 from the previous year, a lesser scale of reduction from the previous year which may suggest an improvement in economic circumstances.

Performance has improved in most of the decision-making categories. **Householder decision** making has remained consistently high with a 0.1 average week increase not causing any fall in service delivery and a high level 95.3 % of householder applications being decided in less than 2 months. To retain this level of service is very important to the customers of Aberdeenshire Council.

Further improvement is welcomed in the **non-householder category**, an area where continuous improvement has been the focus. Whilst improvement was recorded in the last reporting period, it now becomes critical to retain that level of performance, if not improve. This reflects the implementation of the various improvement projects, reviews and efficiencies that have continued throughout the reporting period e.g. use of processing agreements, stop the clock review, legal improvement project, pre-application engagement, use of model conditions, best practice, protocols and regular engagement and liaison with consultees and applicants etc.

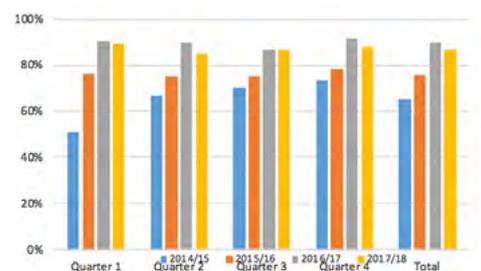
Local Business and industry development slightly increased in average weeks but at 78.6% of applications decided within less than a 2-month period, this remains at a satisfactory level, although the importance of quick timescales for these types of development cannot be underestimated.

Rates of approval and delegation have remained consistent. Monitoring of these rates is ongoing and gives the Service a good indication of any issues that may be occurring in the decision-making process, including regard to the effectiveness and consistency displayed by the Planning Officer and the involvement of Elected Members.

Overall performance has largely recorded continuing improvement. In 2016-17 90% of local applications were decided within 2 months, equating to 8.6 average weeks. In this reporting period of 2017-18 a slightly lower % figure of 87% of local applications were decided within 2 months, but there was also an improved 8.2 average weeks result.

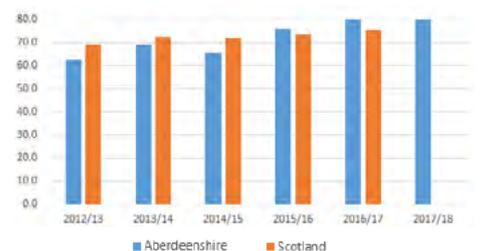
OVERALL PERFORMANCE 2017-18 - % & AVERAGE WEEKS

PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS DETERMINED WITHIN 2 MONTHS



Nationally

PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS DETERMINED WITHIN 2 MONTHS - NATIONALLY



At the time of preparation – Scottish Government performance statistics for 2017/18 not published.

GOALS:

Maintaining the Scottish Government Statutory Performance Indicators at levels which satisfies the Scottish Government.

Continuing to retain the balance between continuous improvement in performance and quality service delivery to customers and meeting the challenges of a changing economy.

OUTCOMES:

Overall improvement within the areas of concern from the last reporting period showing the benefits of focus and implementation of improvement projects.

Work continues to focus on performance in all categories and on continuous improvement. Major applications, although improvement has been recorded, will benefit from reviews of the major application pre-application process and the masterplan process. Legal Agreement timescales will remain the focus of joint Legal and Planning projects of which full reporting will be forthcoming in the next reporting period.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Mairi Stewart - Planning Service Manager

CASE STUDY 16: ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL- PLANNING PERFORMANCE - MAJOR APPLICATIONS 2017-18 - COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council - March 2017- March 2018

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

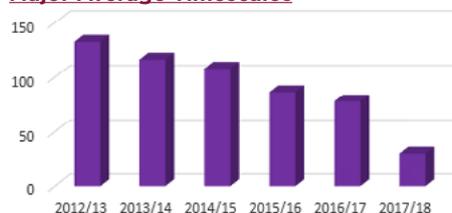
OVERVIEW:

As noted in the previous Case Study on overall performance, ([Case Study 15](#)), the Planning Service and the Legal Service have been focusing on the delivery of a service improvement project to tackle

major application decision timescales. During this reporting period the Service have been working on the introduction of measures to improve Section 75 Legal Agreement timescales which has resulted in a more collaborative way of working across services and with developers and agents. Planning Service staff have been encouraged to adopt a project management approach when dealing with major applications and the use of project management tools have allowed the Service to tackle decision making timescales and engage more with developers, agents and other stakeholders to deliver an improved level of service delivery during this reporting period.

An overall improvement in performance in major application decision making has been recorded during this period when compared with the previous period with a significant reduction achieved in the average weeks' determination timescale. As noted in [Case Study 15](#), similar improvements have been achieved with the Section 75 Legal Agreement average timescale for major applications which has been reduced to 35.7 weeks compared with 125 weeks as recorded under the previous reporting period.

Major Average Timescales



DECISION TIMESCALE - AVERAGE WEEKS

YEAR	AVERAGE WEEKS
2012/13	132.9
2013/14	115.9
2014/15	107.8
2015/16	86.3
2016/17	77.8
2017/18	29.5

Within the context of the overall improvements achieved it remains important to review the breakdown of major applications determined during the reporting period. The breakdown shows the following:

- 15 **major applications** issued during the reporting period:
- 13 had a PPA in place
- 13 issued within the PPA timescale
- 2 issued without a PPA in place

Of the 2 major applications that had no PPA in place, 1 application was determined within the statutory determination period, the other recorded delays. The following explanation for delays were found:

Major Application 1 – Delay Explanation

This proposal was subject to major pre-app discussions and meetings prior to submission and the Planning Service worked with the agent and relevant consultees to identify all relevant planning issues and agree a work programme to ensure that permission was in place to secure affordable housing funding deadlines. Despite the level of communication and engagement by the Planning Service and agreement being reached with the agent in relation to the work programme, the agent declined to sign the Processing Agreement (PA).

The timescale and issues associated with the determination of the application were fully discussed with the agent and there was an awareness of the matters that required to be addressed regarding

access and wider transportation issues during the determination of the application. The Planning Service fully engaged with the agent in a positive manner by holding regular update meetings with the agent and key consultees and provided clarity throughout the process. The application was reported to the relevant Area Committee for determination in line with a work programme and the amendment to the Section 75 Legal Agreement was concluded within 3 months of the Committee meeting in line with the agent's funding deadline.

GOALS:

The Planning Service continue to demonstrate a commitment to working on the continuous improvement in performance while also seeking to deliver a high quality service to customers.

OUTCOMES:

The overall improvement in the average weeks' determination timescales for major applications demonstrates the positive impact of the improvement works that have been implemented during this reporting period. It is acknowledged that additional work is required to build upon the level of performance achieved. The impact of ongoing improvement projects including the review of the major application pre-application and masterplan process along with the continued focus on S75 Legal Agreement timescales will be monitored and reviewed during the next reporting period.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Mairi Stewart - Planning Service Manager

CASE STUDY 17: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT FOR 2017-18: PRE-APPLICATION AND MAJOR APPLICATION REVIEW - COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

2017 Ongoing

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
6 - Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators
12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

The Review of the major application (pre-application) process has been a

committed Service improvement in the last two PPF's. The previous PPF explained that the Review had since been widened to include a much broader remit to include all pre-application work and not simply major development. It was also explained that the Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) along with a Council Improvement Officer had commenced work on this broader review process and outlined the consultation and benchmarking work undertaken. The Review of the pre-application process demonstrates the continuous approach to improvement the Council aims towards, particularly as this Review is also closely linked to the success of other elements of the Service, particularly the Review of the Master Planning Process and the emerging pilot scheme for Design Review.

MAJOR MA APPLICATIONS

Since the **2016/17 PPF**, work has continued and the information gathered has been analysed for common topics of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the service delivered to aid in the formulation of an improved process.

GOALS:

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

OUTCOMES:

So far, it has been established that there are various methods of processing pre-application and major application enquiries throughout Aberdeenshire. It has also revealed that a significant amount of Officer time was being spent on assessing and processing the pre-application enquiries with no cost recovery to the Council.

Recommendations were presented to Service Managers for consideration in September 2017, which included two strands of work - a new process map, updated procedure document and various enhancements of the existing system along with pro-active engagement with developers and agents. The second recommendation was to consider the introduction of a charging structure for

pre-application services to help deliver quality development but also to provide more certainty in the application process. A decision on potential charging would determine the type of pre-application service that could be offered in the future and was therefore central to moving forward with the Review work.



Major Applications Advice

However, the Planning (Scotland) Bill was soon to be published at the time and it was anticipated that changes could be proposed to broaden powers to support discretionary charging for service provision, such as pre-application advice to support an efficient and high performing planning system. The passage of the Planning (Scotland) Bill, particularly the provision of flexible fees, would have a significant bearing upon the consideration of the Review and the recommendations made. It was therefore decided to put the Review on hold until the outcome on charging for pre-application services became clear. Once the Bill becomes law and the passing of the necessary secondary legislation, the Review will recommence thereafter and will reflect the updated planning landscape in respect of a charging structure.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Elizabeth Tully, Planning Officer
Tim Curtis, Improvement Officer

CASE STUDY 18: THE JOURNEY TOWARDS CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE (CSE) ACCREDITATION - COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aboyne Area Office, Gordon House, Inverurie Nov 2016 and ongoing

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:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Private sector Architects

OVERVIEW:

Building Standards agreed to pilot CSE Accreditation for the Planning Service and in November 2016 gained the Cabinet Office National Award was successfully recertified in November 2017 with five compliance pluses for performance, Service improvements and consultation.

During the independent assessment the auditor noted that the Building Standards team had improved performance, noting that an award from the Scottish Government was gained this year in recognition of being one of the top 3 performing Local Authorities. The transition to eBuilding Standards was also acknowledged and this has also gained recognition from CoSLA by attaining a Bronze Award. Consulting with our customers, through focus groups, was noted as an area where real improvement

could be seen. Evidence was presented to demonstrate that the team ensures that the customer is at the heart of driving service changes and improvements.



Kenny Simpson, Building Standards Manager added *“The Team are delighted to have gained recertification and this demonstrates that the Team is going above and beyond in a number of areas and our auditor commented that it was exceptional to have so many compliance pluses when we are only in our second year.”*

Using Building Standards as an initial pilot for CSE Accreditation has been a success and has helped to lay the foundations /

create a model that can be implemented across the Planning Service. This Standard assesses against 57 components with a particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism, staff attitudes and customer insight, ensuring that the customer is at the heart of the decision-making process and driving Service improvements and changes.

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 with Planning Service changes and improvements.

OUTCOMES:

Accreditation to CSE has resulted in significant improvements to the Building Standards Service and the process has now started to be implemented across Development Management. The following components have been progressed within Development Management with a view to gaining full accreditation within the next reporting period should resources and priorities allow. For Example:

Information and access: A review of the Planning website has been completed

based on customer feedback from SOCITM surveys and Agent feedback ensuring that this channel provides the information required in a format that customers can use and understand.

Customer Insight: Implementation of an annual customer satisfaction survey, quarterly analysis of customer feedback via the corporate feedback mechanism 'Have your say', as well as specialist focus groups on key subject areas, flooding and coastal protection and waste services, where it is beneficial to bring everyone together to develop joint solutions.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER
Kathleen Fraser, Project Officer

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY TEAM

CASE STUDY 19: A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ONSHORE WORKS FOR MORAY (EAST) OFFSHORE WIND FARM): AN EXAMPLE OF A PROJECT MANAGED, CUSTOMER FOCUSED, APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing 2017 & 2018
[APP/2018/0623](#) Cable Route
[APP/2018/0624](#) Substation

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

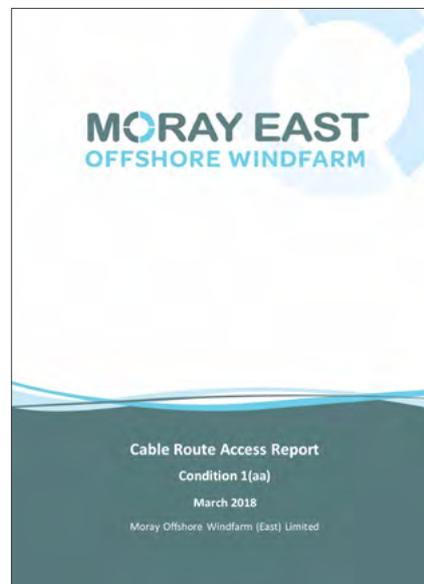
KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Project Management
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Other Staff
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:



MORAY EAST OFFSHORE WINDFARM

This Case Study relates to the onshore works associated with the [Moray \(East\) Offshore Wind Farm](#). During 2017/18 pre-application discussions were undertaken between the Planning Service Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) and the developers.

The scheme had previously been granted a Marine Licence for the offshore elements as well as Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) for onshore infrastructure including the landfall, cable route and substation. Following the awarding of a [Contract for Difference \(CfD\)](#) by the UK Government in September 2017, the developers faced tight timescales to obtain detailed approval for the proposed cable route and substations in connection with the scheme.

The SDDT adopted a tailored approach to meet the needs of the project and ensure effective consultation and engagement were also carried out with stakeholders. Through close and



regular liaison with the developers and consultees, the lead Officer stepped up the level of collaboration in order to set out information requirements, systematically address each condition attached to the extant PPP and set out a project management style timeline for the preparation of information, submission of Matters Specified in Conditions application(s) and for progressing application(s) through the Council's Committee processes timeously.

GOALS:

This approach has allowed the developer to engage with the SDDT in a transparent and positive process, where clear deadlines and requirements were set out at an early stage, which in turn allowed

for a smoother process. Processing Agreements were drafted in order to formalise the project management approach being taken. Colleagues within Legal and Committee Services were engaged at an early stage also (circa 5-6 months prior to submission) to set out, agree and work on proposed Committee timelines for application(s) given the crossing of administrative boundaries and requirement for an overarching Committee decision. Again, early and focussed engagement within the process has helped to set out an open and agreeable timeline for all involved. Ultimately, this should assist in the consideration and delivery of a nationally important renewable energy project.

OUTCOMES:

At the time of writing the applications are progressing through the Committee process, the work done to date has proven highly beneficial so far in coordinating all aspects of the processing of large, complex applications. It is scheduled that the 2 applications will be determined in June 2018.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Murison – Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 20: A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ONSHORE WORKS FOR MORAY (WEST) OFFSHORE WIND FARM): AN EXAMPLE OF A JOINED-UP APPROACH TO CROSS BOUNDARY WORKING

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing 2017 & 2018

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

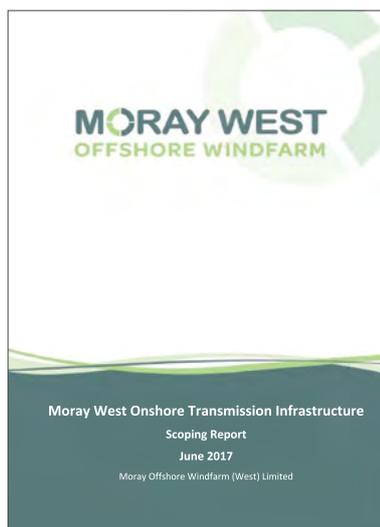
KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Skills Sharing
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Other Staff
- Authority Planning Staff
- Staff from Moray Council

OVERVIEW:



Moray West Offshore Windfarm

The Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) have been engaged in pre-application discussions with the developers behind the proposed **Moray West Offshore Wind Farm**. The project relates to the onshore works and is separate (but related through the same developer) to the Moray East scheme which is mentioned in the previous Case Study. The Moray West project is still at a relatively early stage when compared to the more advanced Moray East project.

The onshore works would cross over between both Aberdeenshire and Moray Council administrative areas, with the onshore infrastructure landfalling in Aberdeenshire before a proposed cable route travels south/south west towards the Moray Council boundary near Fordyce. This proposed route would then travel through Moray to a substation site, itself located close to the Moray/Aberdeenshire border south of Keith.



The cross-boundary nature of this National level application adds complexities to the process and has required some innovative thinking and collaboration between the SDDT, Moray Council and the developers. Regulations require separate planning applications to be submitted to each Local Authority for their portion (albeit 150% of the fee will go to Moray Council, having the larger portion of the site, with Aberdeenshire receiving 0%). Separate Proposal of Application Notices (POAN's) have been submitted also.

GOALS:

Notwithstanding the required separation for the formal planning processes, combined stakeholder meetings with both Authorities, the developer and their contractors/consultants have been taking place to coordinate the submissions. Joined up working has assisted to outline mutually acceptable submission content, with the aim of ensuring that this conforms to requirements from both Authorities. Similarly, timescales for

proposed applications are being tailored and set out between both Authorities to ensure the most streamlined process for the development, notwithstanding the separated and technically individual nature of each component.

Combined and coordinated Processing Agreements are being worked up to cover the entire process. This, along with the joined-up approach, offers a broader degree of transparency for the developer across the project as a whole, where the project can be seen as a single entity with the individual Aberdeenshire/Moray aspects accepted as components of a wider process.

In addition, more bespoke solutions to issues have also been considered and discussed where practical – such as joint Pre-Application Consultation with the Community Events, joint press adverts for any proposed applications, and joint Committees and Pre-Determination Hearings (Discounted due to cross boundary issues). While not all these

solutions are workable, the discussion of these does nonetheless demonstrate an overall willingness to provide the highest level of service for the developer and all stakeholders, including the public, between the two Councils to ensure that all parties can work together and offer the best level of service possible, and subsequently encourage and promote a National development.

OUTCOMES:

Applications should be submitted in summer 2018, where the coordinated approach will hopefully lead to a streamlined and efficient planning process for a National Development Application; made more complex by the cross-boundary issues.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Murison – Senior Planner

DELIVERY TEAM

PLANNING INFORMATION AND DELIVERY TEAM:

Aberdeenshire Council's Planning Information and Delivery Team (PIDT), is now in its second year after the merger of two teams in 2016. The Team has two main functions, on the Information side is the collection and analysis of information on Aberdeenshire to inform the Development Plan and other relevant documents. The Delivery side 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).

The Team also compiles information regarding the progression of allocated sites contained within the LDP 2017 and are responsible for the publication of the **Action Programme** and **Housing/Employment** Land Audits.

The Action Programme is used as a project management tool, with Officers actively working with stakeholders to advance the actions required to bring sites forward. It has an increasingly important role in identifying ineffective sites and influencing future land release to inform the LDP and assessing applications for development.

Moving forward, the Planning Review and Planning Bill suggest an increased emphasis on delivery and an increased profile for the Action Programme as a

tool for delivery. The Team is working hard to ensure that necessary confidence testing will be incorporated into the Action Programme to help prioritise infrastructure requirements to bring development forward and being able to demonstrate a viable path to delivery of a site within the LDP period. This will ensure that Aberdeenshire is well placed to meet the challenges/requirements of outcomes of the Review of the Planning system and in particular changes to the format/requirements of the Action Programme.

As mentioned above, the PIDT are a key contact for Council Services, external consultees and developers and are available to assist with a variety of issues. The Team take a pro-active approach in order to aid the development of allocated sites. In addition, the Team also take an active role in regeneration work of the 4 Towns within Aberdeenshire, which are identified by the LDP 2017.

There are case studies throughout this document highlighting the work that the PIDT has done in collaboration with other Services. In terms of the Team's individual work and looking at the Team's proactive approach to facilitating development and enhancing the level of support to other Services the following examples are pertinent.

The PIDT are making real progress in facilitating the delivery of sites allocated in the LDP. The team provide an efficient and focussed service. As one team the PIDT will aim to continue to progress this work and over the next year will:

- Continue to develop and promote the Action Programme as a proactive project management tool for delivery of the LDP;
- Create a joint database for the PIDT, which will be used as a wider tool for the Council and contain information regarding settlements & services, available/planned infrastructure and development rates
- Be clearer on prospect of delivery of sites within the plan period and have up to date information on levels of delivery completion; and,
- Enhance level of information available in Action Programme particularly in relation to funding / responsibility of infrastructure provision.

CASE STUDY 21: ABERDEENSHIRE HOUSING SITE PROSPECTUS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire: range of sites
November 2017-March 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:

10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation
11 - Production of regular and proportionate advice
14 - Delivering development - stalled sites/legacy cases

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Economic Development
- Highlighting Opportunity

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Registered Social landlords (RSLs)

OVERVIEW:

The Prospectus covers the whole of Aberdeenshire, with over 70 different sites, including areas which are in high and low demand with sites ranging from under 10 houses to over 100 houses giving a range of developers the opportunity to develop. It has been designed and indexed by allocation size rather than administrative areas to encourage developers to look at areas that in general they may not have previously considered.

The Prospectus covers the whole of Aberdeenshire, with over 70 different sites, including areas which are in high and low demand with sites ranging from under 10 houses to over 100 houses giving a range of developers the opportunity to develop. It has been designed so that it is sorted by allocation size rather than administrative areas to encourage developers to look at areas that in general they may not have previously considered.

The Prospectus contains information on the allocated site including site size, description and delivery considerations. Along with this there are also two pictures and a map of each site to provide some context to the site. This information was developed with the involvement of the development industry and other Council Services to ensure the document contained information that was useful to them.

The principal focus of the Prospectus is to aid the delivery of the allocated sites within the Local Development Plan. To assist with the delivery of the sites each site has a Delivery Team contact which should be the first point of contact for interested developers. At this point the Delivery Team will take the appropriate steps in contacting the landowner and facilitating any required meetings.

GOALS:

In addition to the yearly update of the Action Programme, the PIDT have produced a [Housing Site Prospectus](#) which was published in March 2018.

The Prospectus has been produced to provide developers with a collective list of available housing sites, which have been allocated within the Local Development Plan throughout Aberdeenshire, that

landowners and agents have identified as available to be developed. The document has been produced as a means of publicising the sites that are available and has been sent to developers and agents around the north east. The Prospectus also doubles as a marketing tool for the landowner to send out to any contacts that they feel may be interested in the site.

OUTCOMES:

Since the publication of the Housing Site Prospectus the Delivery Team have received positive feedback on the document from the Development Industry. There has also been developer interest in a number of the sites, some of which are currently negotiating a deal with the landowners to take the sites forward.

The team hope that the positive feedback and the success of the document means that it will become an annual publication and that future additions will incorporate any feedback on how this can be improved.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Fiona Thompson, Planner

CASE STUDY 22: ACTION PROGRAMME, AND HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND AUDIT DATABASE

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council July 2017-Ongoing

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:

6 - Continuous improvements - show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators
14 - Delivering development - stalled sites/legacy cases

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Other Staff
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

The PIDT is made up of Delivery project officers and Information officers, responsibilities include the production of the **Action programme** and **Housing/ Employment** Land Audits.

The Action Programme is maintained by the Delivery side of the Team as an Excel document and lists the several hundred allocated development sites across Aberdeenshire outlining the key steps in the delivery programme and timescales for each. This is a useful tool, but it was clear that accessing and navigating through the spreadsheet was problematic for some and the general appearance of the document is unappealing. The requirement for the Action Programme to be published and printed regularly requires a laborious process, combining Excel, Word and Pdf elements. There is also scope for inconsistencies due to several Team members editing the document regularly which results in a less professional looking document when published.

As a result, the Action Programme is underutilised by key end users.

GOALS:

It was decided that an advantageous solution would be to incorporate the Action Programme into the same database that the Housing Land Audit and Employment Land Audit are reported from by the Information side of the Team. It will be of mutual benefit to share site records and avoid duplicating the common information that both Teams collected in the past such as updates from developers and progress of site delivery.

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:

The new system will allow the life of a site to be tracked in one location, from early dialogue to monitoring subsequent completions. This also allows the Team to focus more on qualitative tasks and making use of the information to further the aims and objectives of the plan.

Improving the accessibility of combined, 'live' Action Programme/Audits within the Council will benefit the majority of the Services as it will undoubtedly be used more often for forward planning, for example to deliver local and strategic projects including housing, schools, health care facilities, road/ transport infrastructure, as it was always intended.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kirsty Black, Project Officer
Mel Greig, Senior Sustainability, Information & Research Officer

CASE STUDY 23: KINGSEAT - JOINT WORKING: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

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:

Kingseat is a settlement developed on the site of the former Kingseat Hospital, approximately one mile east of Newmachar. The site has conservation area status, although none of the individual buildings are listed. In 2003 consent was granted for several hundred new houses tied to the development of the redevelopment of the former hospital buildings. The aim was to create an inclusive new settlement with all types of housing, commercial and employment land centred on the old hospital grounds in an attractive rural setting.



Despite the majority of the new housing being built the development is incomplete with several of the hospital buildings still lying vacant/derelict and a lack of community facilities for residents.



The community at Kingseat is active and have compiled a list of priorities/issues to be addressed ranging from lack of facilities for children, landscaping and drainage, to lack of retail/community buildings. The unfinished housing development at Kingseat was promoted to the [Garioch Area Committee in June 2017](#) by an Elected Member, as an issue that needed to be resolved. As of July 2017, the Planning Information and Delivery Team (PIDT) have been involved in reviewing the background to the site along with determining the best course of action to address some of the issues/priorities identified by the residents.

After visiting the site and reviewing all the information/ history relating to the case, discussion with Local Members and the residents, the PIDT had a full picture of the problems and what needed to be resolved. One of the main community aspirations was to have the playpark installed that was approved but never delivered.



With this in mind the Council served two Enforcement Notices on the landowner, one requiring the removal of a spoil heap on the area of land to be used for the playpark and the second seeking the installation of 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 and neither were the works undertaken by the end of the compliance period. As a result of the inaction, 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 has been taking steps to pursue direct action. This would mean carrying out the work detailed in the enforcement notices, i.e. removing the spoil heap and installing the playpark.

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:

The Council are currently still working through the processes that need to be followed to deliver the children's playpark. 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.

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

At the start of the year the ownership within Kingseat changed so now in addition to working with the Council Services, and external agencies Delivery Officers are also hoping to support the new landowner moving forward to allow the development to reach its potential.

This work is an example of a positive approach that has been taken, acknowledging the issues/ past problems in an effort to move forward and work collaboratively with Councillors, residents, and other stakeholders to improve the existing environment for the community.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Fiona Thompson - Planner

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

CASE STUDY 24: ENGAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION - PORTSOY CHURCH, PORTSOY

LOCATION AND DATES:

St John The Baptist Church, Seafield Terrace, Portsoy, May- August 2017
APP/2017/1351: Listed Building Consent and **APP/2017/1352**: Full Planning Permission for Conversion of Church to form a Dwellinghouse

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
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

Tandem Listed Building Consent and Full Planning Permission applications were lodged in May 2017 from Andrew Keir Chartered Architect for the conversion of the former **Baptist Church in Portsoy** into a dwellinghouse with associated alterations to facilitate the proposed conversion. The building is of built heritage value both in terms of the Category B listing and prominent location within the Portsoy conservation area.

Beyond the change of use element, the application also proposed the removal of an existing flue, the reinstatement of former openings, the creation of new openings, replacement of existing window units with timber fittings, and the addition of secondary glazing to some existing single glaze windows.



From the outset it was clear that the main challenge for the Planning Service, in terms of the determination of both applications, would be balancing the desire of the agent to provide a practical conversion solution to their client, against the role and remit of interested consultees to make sure that any works to be undertaken would be done so in a sympathetic manner which did not erode the character of the listed building or the wider conservation area.

This process began with early consultation engagement with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the Council's Built Heritage Section. Both consultees responded stating they were satisfied, in principle, with the conversion of the building on the basis that it would secure a viable and ongoing use for the building but suggested that improvements and revisions to certain aspects of the external design of the building be considered. These comments were also echoed by the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland who also provided comments.

The Planning Service then entered into detailed negotiations with the agent, using comments received from the consultees as a basis to identify improvements which could be secured. Although the agent remained generally agreeable to the majority of suggested changes, they requested that certain elements of the scheme remain in order to meet Building Standard Regulations. The agent then submitted revised drawings to reflect negotiations. Having then assessed the development against applicable planning policy it was the view of the Planning Service that the application could be supported and was then approved under delegated powers.

GOALS:

To develop and maintain good working relationships and communication levels with agents and key consultees to secure positive outcomes and continued collaborative working on future projects.

The role of the Planning Service in the determination of the associated applications will result in a high-quality development within a building which can once again make a positive contribution to the town of Portsoy through its new use whilst still respecting its original character.

OUTCOMES:

The adoption of a pragmatic approach and understanding of the wider benefits of the proposal played an important role in the handling of the case and contributed to negotiations over the design solutions agreed.

While development has yet to commence on the building at the time of writing, it is hoped the scheme will result in a high-quality development acknowledging the built heritage sensitivities.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Newlands, Planner (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 25: COLLABORATIVE WORK TO ENSURE A QUALITY OUTCOME – INVERURIE CAMPUS, INVERURIE

LOCATION AND DATES:

Inverurie Academy, Jackson Street, Inverurie.

POAN submitted September 2016
Formal planning application validated September 2017, determined February 2018.

APP/2017/2136: Full Planning Permission for Erection of Inverurie Campus, comprising Education, Community and Sport Facilities, Formation of Car park and Associated Infrastructure, Aberdeenshire Council

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

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
- Town Centres
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing
- Transport
- Active Travel

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

This Case Study involved the redevelopment of Inverurie Academy into a community campus within the settlement of Inverurie. The existing Academy site was to be utilised and the proposal would ensure a smooth transition from the existing school to the new facility. It was clear that the existing Academy was not fit for purpose and this proposal would not only provide a new

school but also improved community and sports facilities.

An initial meeting took place between the applicant, agent and Planning Service in April 2016 to discuss the initial proposal and examine options for development. This was the beginning of the working relationship between the Council Services and ensured that any major issues were highlighted at an early stage. The Case Officer was identified and provided a direct point of contact for both the applicant and agent throughout the determination process.

A POAN was submitted in September 2016 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 discussions took place between the Planning Service and the applicant to ensure the community involvement was captured and the widest possible audience was involved in steering the proposal.

The proposal was submitted to the Major Application pre-application process and discussed at a meeting in December 2016. Several internal and external parties were represented and provided important feedback on the proposal at the time. Further meetings took place in July and August 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 application was lodged in August 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 agreed funding for this proposal was time restricted and a strict timetable for commencement of development was essential. 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. A Planning Process Agreement (PPA) was drafted at the start of the process to ensure all parties were clear on the process to be followed and the critical deadlines.

The application was submitted to Garioch Area Committee in December 2017 with a favourable recommendation and was approved by the Area Committee subject to several conditions. The decision was issued in January 2018.

GOALS:

The provision of a new community campus to serve the residents of Inverurie and the local area forms part of the key planning objectives for the settlement. A principal requirement for the project was to retain the campus at the heart of the settlement and community, therefore requiring unique solutions in redeveloping the site.

PROPOSED LAYOUT OF INVERURIE CAMPUS



The Planning Service adopted a proactive approach providing considerable pre-application input into this proposal over an extensive period. Alongside the formal determination processes that had to be adhered to, the promotion of collaborative working and early engagement allowed matters to be highlighted and discussed and ensured that a complete submission with all supporting information was lodged.

A good working relationship was developed with both the applicant and agent and this proved beneficial in ensuring quick and competent project management of the determination process from initial discussions through to the formal decision stage.

OUTCOMES:

The application was granted permission following determination by **Garioch Area Committee in December 2017** subject to a number of conditions. The decision was issued in January 2018 subject to conditions. All matters were concluded in February 2018. The funding deadline was met, and the development has now started onsite.

The project fulfils a number of priorities as set out in the **Garioch Community Plan 2016-2019**, specifically Priority 1- Healthy Communities; Priority 2- Strong Communities and Priority 3- Safe Communities.

Testimonial from John Macleod, Property Manager, Property & Facilities, Aberdeenshire Council:

“The development of the new Inverurie Community Campus is a key project for Aberdeenshire Council and the Inverurie community. The Property Service and Planning Service developed a collaborative working relationship from the inception of the project and this proved beneficial in obtaining planning consent and ultimately starting the construction of the new campus in a timely manner. The final design is a high quality development that will serve the local community for years to come.”

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Matthew Watt, Planner (Development Management)



CASE STUDY 26: A ONE COUNCIL APPROACH

- MEADOWBANK, TURRIFF

LOCATION AND DATES:

POAN submitted 15/08/2016
Formal planning application
(**APP/2016/3261**), Full Planning
Permission for Residential Development
consisting of 231 Dwellinghouses and
Associated Infrastructure, validated
20/12/2016

Reported to Area Committee 12/09/2017

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:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

The Planning Service engaged with a developer to promote a scheme of 231 Affordable Houses on a site allocated for 150 houses in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Service adopted a project management-based approach to ensuring that the project was managed effectively and that the Council acted in a One Council manner.

The land at **Meadowbank, Turriff** (2017 – site OP2) was first allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan 2006 and later in the Aberdeenshire LDP 2012 (for 150 houses). Other than a Masterplan for the 150 houses being approved in 2013



there was little interest in the site until the developer approached the Council with an informal proposal to develop 231 houses with 100% on-site Affordable Housing.

Adopting a One Council approach to collaborative working within the Council, the Service entered into informal discussions with the developer and once an application was submitted a Team Manager (Development Management) was appointed to coordinate and oversee the cross-Service work on the proposal with a view to presenting the application to the Formartine Area Committee. The recent down turn in the local economy was recognised as contributing towards a drop in demand for larger houses and the Service worked with the applicant to recalibrate the site allowing Members to support a scheme for 231 houses. Following further negotiations within the Council a planning application with a favourable recommendation was reported to the Area Committee and, once developed, this will result in the Council and partners delivering 58 units on site and the private sector delivering the balance as affordable housing as well as seeing a longstanding allocation being built out.

In terms of process the project was managed from pre-application stage until instruction of the Legal Agreement and, always, had regard to delivering the Development Plan, ensuring an

open for business approach and being transparent leading to certainty for the community. Whilst no decision has yet been issued, owing to negotiations relating to ownership matters, the Service are hopeful these can be resolved to allow the permission to be issued and the commencement of development.

GOALS:

The Planning Service had several goals relating to both the LDP and the wider planning process. The delivering of this site, a key allocated site in the north of Aberdeenshire, delivering a site of 231 much needed affordable houses and securing appropriate developer obligations towards offsetting the impact on the local infrastructure were amongst these goals. The Service also aimed to ensure that, if delivered, a high-quality development will result.

OUTCOMES:

The key outcome from this Case Study is a clear demonstration of how the Council is committed to being Open for Business and how the Council works corporately in a One Council manner to project manage key planning proposals with a view to delivering, in a coordinated manner, the wider aims of the Council.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Darren Ross, Team Manager, Development Management
Laura Dingwall, Planner, Development Management

CASE STUDY 27: ENGAGING TO ENSURE A QUALITY OUTCOME

- STRATHBURN COTTAGE, INVERURIE

LOCATION AND DATES:

APP/2017/1405: Full Planning Permission for Demolition of Existing Cottage and Outbuildings and Erection of 15 Flats and Associated Car Parking, Craigdon Construction - Strathburn Cottage, Middlemuir Road, Inverurie, July 2017 - April 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:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Economic Development
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

This Case Study involves the redevelopment of brownfield land for a flatted development of 15 residential units (affordable) within a central residential area in the settlement of Inverurie. The site had several constraints including flooding and a possibility of contamination given the former use of the site for a variety of commercial, industrial and storage purposes. There was significant planning history to the site including a recent refusal and strong local opposition. Following a further refusal of 18 units on the site, by the Area Committee in 2016, the agent sought pre-application advice from the Planning Service to discuss how the site could be progressed.



During the pre-application stage initial feedback on the site was provided by the Planning Service and key issues such as the existing flood risk of the site and the perception of over development by the local community were discussed and reviewed in detail with the agent to ensure that they had a full understanding of the issues and the concerns raised by interested parties. Through discussions and negotiations with the agent and relevant consultees, specifically the Council's Flooding & Coastal Protection Section, the agent proceeded with the submission of an application for a reduced scheme of 15 units and a technical drainage/flooding solution that offered sufficient mitigation to flooding on the site as well as securing betterment to existing flooding issues in the surrounding area.

Following the pre-application discussions, the agent lodged a formal application accompanied by a complete package of supporting information and technical statements. The resultant application submission received fewer letters of objection and attracted letters of support.

Following full assessment and consideration by the Planning Service, in liaison with consultees, the application was reported to the **Garioch Committee in September 2017** with a positive recommendation and was unanimously supported. Full Planning permission was granted in May 2018, following the completion of the Section 75 Legal Agreement.

GOALS:

To encourage and maintain a positive working relationship with the agent and good level of engagement by assisting with a review of the planning history and discussion in relation to aspects of the development site that the Service considered should be revisited prior to the submission of a revised proposal to secure a more positive outcome.

To work with, and maintain good communication and engagement levels with, relevant consultees, the public and Local Members to ensure that all interested parties had a clear understanding of the proposal including the technical constraints and possible solutions associated with any redevelopment opportunities.

OUTCOMES:

The positive benefits associated with pre-application discussions to review public objections and the Area Committee reasons for refusal were demonstrated by this case. This approach assisted the agent by allowing them to produce a robust supporting statement and complete application submission which included photo montages of the finished design and addressed the technical information in a more user-friendly manner that could be readily understood by members of the public and Local Members

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Hilary Wilkinson, Planner (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 28: ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES FOLLOWING REFUSAL – UDNY ARMS, NEWBURGH

UDNY ARMS, NEWBURGH - APPROVED RE DEVELOPMENT



LOCATION AND DATES:

Udney Arms, Newburgh Partial Demolition of and Alterations to Hotel to Include 12 En-suite Rooms and Manager's Flat, Conversion of Bedroom Annexe to Form 2 Dwellings, Erection of 5 Townhouses and Ancillary Works - [APP/2017/0017](#)
Application validated 09/01/2017
Decision issued 13/03/2018

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (Flood Prevention Unit)

OVERVIEW:

The Planning Service engaged with the developer to discuss and overcome earlier reasons for refusal associated with a previous planning application. This approach resulted in the submission of an improved and higher quality development proposal, which, if implemented, will materially improve a longstanding flooding issue in the area.

GOALS:

The Service aims to engage with all developers through pre-application work and this Case Study demonstrates the merit in these discussions which, following a refusal, has resulted in the reason for refusal being systematically addressed and led the Planning Service to support the application at the [Area Committee](#).

OUTCOMES:

Full planning permission was sought for the conversion of a hotel and the erection of 5 Town Houses. The applicant engaged with the Planning Service, Flood Risk and Coast Protection and SEPA to resolve previous reasons for refusal and specifically flooding issues within the site, offering a betterment to the long-standing flooding issues within the settlement. These discussions resulted

in the Planning Service being able to support a well-designed development on a disused site in a prominent location within the village. The retention of historic buildings was important to the character of this coastal village.

Following this pre-application process the planning application was presented to the Area Committee with a positive recommendation and ultimately permission was granted which, when implemented, will result in a development which is an asset to the village.

The collaboration between various Council Services, external agencies and the developer has not only resulted in this development being approved but betterment to a long-standing flooding issue.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Laura Dingwall, Planner

CASE STUDY 29: PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOWARDS QUALITY OUTCOMES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Donald Russell, Ltd, Carnie Road, Kintore, Aberdeenshire
Pre-application enquiry lodged March 2016

APP/2017/0019: Formal planning application validated 23 January 2017, determined 3 May 2017

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Environment
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Economic Development
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

This Case Study relates to a proposal, which represented a significant expansion of an existing meat production, cold storage and mail order distribution facility within Kintore. There was a planning history to the site and in recognition of the scale of development, constrained nature of the site and issues posed by a 'Protected Area', the agent approached the Planning Service for pre-application advice.

The 'Protected Area' is shown in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017- Kintore settlement statement as

P6- (Settlement Statement for Kintore)

to conserve the Midmill Long Cairn, a significant scheduled ancient monument occupying the south-east corner of the site.



Through discussions with the agent to establish the client's operational needs and negotiation with colleagues in Archaeology, the Policy Team and Historic Environment Scotland (HES), a solution was agreed to allow limited, low impact development within the identified 'Protected Area'. The ability to support the parking requirement for the site in this area allowed the applicant to secure all the floorspace required on the site and realise the expansion aspirations for the business.

GOALS:

Aside from the 'Protected Area', the pre-application process allowed for consideration of whether the application was a major development, details to be agreed regarding the overall parking requirement, landscaping and enclosures, public access arrangements and the supporting information that had to be submitted with the application to secure the submission of a complete application with all relevant supporting information.



The determination of the planning application was managed in line with the terms of a Planning Processing Agreement. This was agreed with the agent at the early stages of the

determination process to ensure that they could fully address the various complex planning considerations associated with this proposal.



OUTCOMES:

The pre-application discussions and positive early engagement by the Planning Service and consultees was fundamental to the decision-making process, by liaising closely with the agent and consultees, the Service were able to clarify the operational needs of the applicant and work with consultees to secure a resolution prior to the submission of the formal planning application. The planning application progressed through the formal application process with no significant issues raised by consultees and no representations. Planning permission was granted for a phased development to meet the growing needs of the business.

Testimonial from Chris Smith, Architect, Davidson Smith Partnership LLP

"Aberdeenshire Council Planning Department provided clear and effective engagement from the start of the pre-application process right through to approval on what was a particularly complex project involving many proposed phases of development and the protection of a historic monument"

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Bruce Strachan, Senior Planner (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 30: HOUSEBUILDER ENGAGEMENT - HOUSEBUILDERS FORUM

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council HQ - 19 January 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

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Masterplanning
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Economic Development
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Local Housebuilders
- Leader of the Council
- Chair of Infrastructure Services Committee
- Vice Chair of Infrastructure Service Committee
- Chief Executive
- Director of Infrastructure Services
- Head of Planning & Building Standards
- Planning Service Managers
- Other Service representatives as appropriate

OVERVIEW:

A further Housebuilders Forum was held on 19 January 2018, whereby housebuilders were invited to attend to give them opportunities to discuss and receive updates on current and ongoing planning matters. Importantly this Forum is to give this group of customers the scope and opportunity to openly highlight any issues they may have and/or consider innovative and collaborative ways forward to ensure high quality delivery of development. The involvement of Senior Councillors, the Chief Executive, Director and Head of Planning gave the strong message of a 'One Council' approach to ensure any issues and concerns were firstly acknowledged and secondly solutions would be collaboratively considered with certainty of outcomes. It also enabled Senior Councillors to make the housebuilders aware of their part in the decision-making process and the balance required by them to satisfy the needs of their communities whilst encouraging economic development.

The **Agenda** covered topics that were considered previously and brought forward to report on progress and/or updates.

Presentations were carried out as appropriate.

GOALS:

To meet the priorities of the Council through a collaborative approach with our customers – to ensure a 'One Council' approach to achieving the common goal of planning and delivering high quality and sustainable development.

OUTCOMES:

Key action points were collated and forwarded to the Forum. These were based on mutual commitments to consider and resolve key issues regarding housing supply, education provision and new development, affordable housing provision, Section 75 timescales and early engagement on roads construction and layout for new developments. A commitment to continue the Forums on a more frequent basis was given.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Robert Gray - Head of Service/Mairi Stewart - Planning Service Manager

CASE STUDY 31: COMMUNITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT - COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Mackie Academy – Stonehaven (May 2017) and Buchan House - Peterhead (August 2017)

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

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

13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Conservation
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Skills Sharing
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies (Kincardine and Mearns Area Community Council Forum and Peterhead Community Council)
- Authority Planning Staff
- Other Authority Staff
- Other (Elected Members)

OVERVIEW:

The Planning Service has engaged with various **Community Councils** in the reporting period – including some who have reformed. In co-operation with Council Area Managers and Area office staff, these engagement events and the topics covered have been undertaken in different forms to suit the particular circumstances or requests for engagement. This tailored approach has allowed the Service to develop further relationships with these Community Councils, to understand their key concerns and to engage with them on specific matters relating to their area. Training has taken place outwith normal working hours to reflect that the Community Councils are voluntary organisations. An online training module is up and running which is an aid for many Community Councils covering the basics of Development Management and this online module has allowed the Community Councils to learn and adapt

at their own pace but also allowed the Service to supplement this module with bespoke training.

Community Council Influence in Planning
This module has been developed to assist Community Councilors understand planning applications

Processing a Planning Application
This module has been developed to assist Community Councilors understand planning application processing

Major Planning Application Process
This module has been developed to assist Community Councilors understand a major planning application process

ONLINE COMMUNITY COUNCIL TRAINING

GOALS:

To develop a greater understanding by Community Councils on their role in the Development Management and other planning processes with a view to improved engagement and contributions. To create better relationships and interaction between Community Council representatives and Planning Service staff.

OUTCOMES:

To achieve the goals above, two events of note are the subject of this Case Study.

1.Presentation to Kincardine and Mearns Community Council Forum by the Team Manager (Development Management) for Kincardine & Mearns and Marr (May 2017)

Through liaison with the Council's **Area Managers** office for the Kincardine & Mearns area, and as part of a wider agenda, the Planning Service was asked to attend the Local Community Council Forum to provide information on several planning related topics. This took place on the evening of 25 May 2017. In attendance were representatives from a number of **Community Councils in the Kincardine & Mearns** area and several Elected Members of Aberdeenshire Council.

In a 45-minute presentation, the following topics which had been requested as specific issues from the community, were covered;

- Planning Process/Consultation/ Keeping Community Councils up-to-date
- Enabling Development
- Conservation Areas
- Permitted Development Rights

A number of questions were asked around these topics.

2.Informal Out of Hours Training Meeting between the Team Manager (Development Management) for the Formartine and Buchan Area, and the Vice-Chairperson of the Peterhead Community Council (August 2017)

In mid-2017 the Vice Chairperson of the Peterhead Community Council, which had recently reformed, approached the Planning Service for training. This one-to-one session covered the role of the Community Council in the Development Management process and in particular the processes for consultation involved in Aberdeenshire. It also covered issues such as material considerations and non-material considerations.

The Peterhead Community Council were also directed to the online training module. Response below.

“Following the re-establishment of Peterhead Community Council, Planning Officers have assisted new Members by providing some much-needed guidance on the Planning process and their role within this. Officers have been accessible, ready to answer questions and to provide additional support where needed”.

It is the intention to continue to liaise with Community Councils at similar events in the forthcoming year as part of an ongoing commitment to maintain and strengthen working relationships with Community Councils.

NAME OF KEY OFFICERS

Darren Ross, Team Manager (Development Management)
Neil C Stewart, Team Manager (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 32: PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPER MEETING

- TRANSPORTATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Masterplanning
- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Skills Sharing
- Transport
- Designing Streets and the Public realm

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

In line with previous Improvement commitments, the Council continue to encourage and facilitate regular meetings between Planners, Transportation Engineers, developers and agents to consider project designs at the pre-application enquiry stage.

The purpose of such meetings is to ensure that the Council are working in a collaborative manner and engaging with developers and agents in accordance with Designing Streets and Council standards to ensure that lessons are learned and information on common difficulties and solutions can be shared, identified and resolutions achieved.

Examples of common difficulties that have been identified and highlighted because of this process of engagement include speed management, efficient use of roads space, footways, flood management, SUDS drainage details and parking standards.

GOALS:

This collaborative approach to **pre-application discussions** is aimed at seeking to provide an opportunity for dialogue with developers and agents and to facilitate discussion in relation to good and bad practice which can be used to guide a development site forward. It is recognised that avoiding unnecessary complications in the design and any associated unnecessary cost and delay for a developer and agent is a key part of this process.

The Council recognises that bespoke design sometimes requires **non-standard details** and this process of engagement and collaborative working facilitates a process for developers to gain the necessary approval for such an approach. This approach can, in turn, achieve a higher quality of design and, in time, widen the list of detailing options, by utilising and sharing the experience and knowledge of the Council and developers.

The success of this approach is dependent upon the level of engagement and round the table discussions to ensure that all options can be discussed and evaluated prior to the developer committing to a specific approach.

OUTCOMES:

The main outcome of this approach lies in the provision and facilitation of a pre-application engagement process that encourages and facilitates discussions between relevant Council Officers, developers and their consultants. This approach has demonstrated that early and positive engagement allows a more complete evaluation of options to secure the best design which remains cost effective for the developer.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Peter MacCallum, Transportation Manager

CASE STUDY 33: COLLECTIVELY ADDRESSING LIVE ISSUES - BIOMASS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

LOCATION AND DATES:

July 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 customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (Environmental Health and Economic Development)
- The Farming community and National Farmers Union (Scotland) (NFUS)

OVERVIEW:

Reacting to an increase in the number of unauthorised biomass boilers a guidance note was prepared to inform when formal planning permission was required for these developments and, in consultation with Economic Development colleagues, there was engagement with the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) on the dissemination and use of this guidance note.

GOALS:

The preparation of the guidance note is intended to be a proactive step and to assist the farming community in being aware when permission is required for biomass installations and the standard of information required by the planning authority. The aim is to reduce the number of complaints received and to improve the quality of the environment for the people of Aberdeenshire.

OUTCOMES:

There had been several retrospective applications received for biomass boilers primarily located at farm steadings across Aberdeenshire in 2017 and many more are anticipated during 2018. The National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) and several boiler manufacturers were unaware that planning permission, under certain circumstances, was required. To address this issue, the Planning Service produced a Summary of the Regulations for Permitted Development Rights for biomass boilers. The summary sets out a clear checklist with **guidance notes** for biomass boilers on agricultural land and elsewhere and is publicly available on Aberdeenshire Council's website. The availability of the Regulations Summary will have a positive impact with regards informing stakeholders of their rights and responsibilities in terms of existing or proposed biomass boiler installations. The determination of these applications has required regular communication between Environmental Health and the Planning Service. In the first instance Environmental Health request that the applicant submits a completed **Biomass Boiler Information Request Form** and this

information is used in their assessment of the development. There are several factors which influence the acceptability of such development including distance of boilers to nearby receptors/public roads, the thermal capacity of the boiler, the type of fuel burned, the height of the flue and prevailing wind directions. Retrospective applications for biomass boilers have, in some instances, been refused based on objections from Environmental Health relating to smoke nuisance and the impact on the health of nearby residents.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

John Todd, Planner

CASE STUDY 34A: RETAINING AN OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND JOINED-UP APPROACH – NORTHWOODS, MINTLAW

LOCATION AND DATES:

APP/2016/2264 – Planning Permission in Principle for Formation of Business Park and Associated Infrastructure – Northwoods, Mintlaw
APP/2016/2264 POAN submitted 11 December 2014
Application valid 08 August 2016
Reported to **Buchan Area Committee** on 05 September 2017
Reported to **Infrastructure Services Committee** on 05 October 2017
Decision issued 09 March 2018

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Economic Development
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (property, waste and roads)

OVERVIEW:

Full planning permission was sought for a business park to the north of Mintlaw. While land had been allocated for business use as part of a large allocation for a mixed-use development to the south of the village, the site was not considered to be adequate for the needs of the end users of the site.

The Council, as one of the proposed developers, could improve recycling facilities locally.

The site was not allocated in the Local Development Plan (LDP), the amount and extent of users within the site had to be established and agreed and the roads network had to be able to cope with the development; specifically, at the Toll of Birness, to the south of the settlement, where the public road joined the A90 Trunk Road.

Within the Council, collaborative working between Property, Waste Management and the Architects resulted in a One Council approach. It was considered that the employment site was likely to improve the traffic situation in the village as it had potential to result in less vehicular movements south of the village thus meaning a more sustainable development.

GOALS:

The pragmatic supporting of the development by the Service further leads to the aims and objectives of the Council in terms of sustainable economic development, promoting sustainable services and seeing employment land

delivered where currently allocated sites in the LDP had not been forthcoming.

OUTCOMES:

The application was presented to both the Buchan Area Committee and the Infrastructure Services Committee where Members agreed with the Planning Service's recommendation to approve. This recommendation was endorsed reflecting a wider Council "open for business" approach. Permission has been issued 9 March 2018 and the Service are now working with the applicant to discharge conditions to allow development to commence on site.

Regarding the process of the application the developer said:

"We were pleased with the planning application process. It demonstrated collaboration between ourselves and the Council and will allow us to grow our business in a sustainable manner. We were pleased with the pragmatic approach to the decision-making process Officers took and we look forward to delivering the social and economic benefits of this development".

Gary Purves, Land Development Manager,
Colaren Homes

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Alan Davidson, Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 34B: RETAINING AN OPEN FOR BUSINESS AND JOINED-UP APPROACH/COLLABORATIVE WORKING FOR PHASING INFRASTRUCTURE - MINTLAW MASTERPLAN & APPLICATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Masterplan public consultation 01 September 2017

Various

Mintlaw OP1 Masterplan and Planning application

Masterplan ENQ/2015/1691

APP/2017/2547

Mixed Use Development - Erection of 500 Dwellinghouse, Business, Community, Services for the Elderly, Retail and 5Ha of Employment Land

Validated: 17/10/2017

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 and consultees on planning applications
- 12 - Corporate working across services to improve customer 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
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies (Transport Scotland)
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (Transportation)

OVERVIEW:

In 2012 land was allocated for a large scale mixed use development. This allocation was carried forward into the 2017 Local Development Plan. In 2017 a Masterplan was submitted and, as part of the Masterplan process a capacity issue at the A952/A90 priority junction (Toll of Birness) was highlighted through the Transport Assessment process which was scoped and agreed with the Council. Aberdeenshire Council has developed a partnering approach with the developer, Bancon, and their advisors to address the transportation issues associated with accommodating the new development.

INDICATIVE LAYOUT TAKEN FROM APPROVED MASTERPLAN



The Council - both Planning and Transportation Services - worked in close liaison with the developer and Transport Scotland (the Council as Roads Authority for the A952 and Transport Scotland as Roads Authority for the A90 Trunk Road) to agree an approach where the Masterplan could be progressed thus helping facilitate the delivery of the LDP but recognising that the issue needed to be addressed through the planning application process.

The Transportation Service also engaged with Bancon, the developer, developing a partnership approach and taking part in workshops and meetings. Key to this was understanding the developer's aspirations and timescales for delivery whilst having a realistic approach to solving problems in the road network. We also looked at the affordability of potential infrastructure improvements needed to deal with forecast traffic impact.

The Planning Service recognise how critical this junction improvement is to releasing not only allocated sites in the Mintlaw settlement but any other development on the A952 corridor.

The Service are continuing to work with consultees, developers and stakeholders

at providing a One Council approach to facilitating delivery of a solution. Taking a realistic approach on the existing problems on the road network, we are jointly developing a plan for phased upgrading work at key junctions which will allow proportionate contributions to be placed into a fund which will build up linked to house completions. In this regard the Transportation Service, in conjunction with Planning and Developer Obligations, have identified a delivery mechanism for new infrastructure at Toll of Birness.

This fund will then be used to deliver a proportionate upgrade, when a traffic impact limit is reached, or be added to a larger project fund, linked to an area wide strategic network upgrade led by the regional transport partnership, NESTRANS, in coordination with Transport Scotland.

This approach will allow development to proceed in a carefully controlled manner whilst ensuring that monies are set aside to provide transport network upgrades when needed.

It is anticipated that this will assist in putting in place the necessary planning consents and give confidence to the

developer to bring forward the scheme. This has been communicated to the developer and their consultants who have recently presented various options that meet their own mitigation obligations as well as facilitating further additional development on the A952 corridor.

GOALS:

Finding a pragmatic solution to the issue identified will allow, not only this allocated site to be approved in some form, but a longer-term strategy for delivering other sites in Mintlaw and beyond affected by the Toll of Birness junction issue. The agreed way forward allowed the Council to support the Masterplan which, in turn, allowed the developer to proceed to

submit an application with some degree of confidence.

OUTCOMES:

The main outcome of this Case Study is a continued demonstration of the Council's Open for Business approach to dealing with applications/Masterplans and how cross-Service working has resulted in a solution being offered to the developer. The Service are currently progressing with planning application APP/2017/2547 to deliver 500 houses, 5ha employment land and land for community facilities on the allocated site. The Planning and Transportation Services and the developer have reached an agreed position to secure proportional contributions towards

an intervention on the Toll of Birness junction. This has been presented to Transport Scotland, and subject to their formal agreement the application is expected to progress to the Committee stage for determination in summer 2018. This will allow the development to proceed in a carefully and controlled manner ensuring that upgrades can be delivered.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Alan Davidson, Senior Planner, Development Management
James Hewitt, Planner, SDDT
Peter MacCallum, Roads Development Manager

CASE STUDY 35: HILL OF BANCHORY - LESSONS LEARNED FOR INTEGRATING NEW PHASES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Bancon Offices and on site – Hill of Banchory, Banchory – September 2017

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 and consultees on planning applications
12 – Corporate working across services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Designing Streets and the Public Realm

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

The Council's Transportation Engineers and Planning Officers held workshop meetings with local developer Bancon's Team at their offices at Hill of Banchory and on site to look at how well the

streetscape in the early phases of the wider development at Hill of Banchory had worked and what lessons could be learned to go forward into the next phases.

GOALS:

This collaborative approach was aimed at improving pre-application engagement between the Development Management Service, the Transportation Service and local developers. The ultimate objective being collective learning about how to improve the approach to designing streetscapes and the public realm and improving physical placemaking.

OUTCOMES:

As a result of the joint discussions and on-site analysis of the existing situation, a specific issue was identified with screen planting belts which, although very effective, in providing screening had led to issues with sense of place, speed management and maintenance of the planted areas. The houses had, at some locations, become somewhat lost in the trees and the main distributor road through the development was agreed to have become isolated and featureless.

The new development was to take primary access from an existing roundabout which was also considered to be featureless. Agreement was reached for a scheme of remodelling of the roundabout central island to provide a more attractive gateway feature for the new development area but using planting

which would not add an additional maintenance burden to the Council in the future.

A new approach to the design of typical street cross-sections for the next phases which would accommodate planting in a way which would generate a greater sense of community, better connectivity and a better street environment for all users was agreed.

This collaborative project with a local developer and an important statutory consultee remains at an early stage and it is envisaged that further meetings will take place as the development progresses.



NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Peter MacCallum, Transportation Manager

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Customer Focus 2017-18

CASE STUDY 36: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, SURVEYS, FEEDBACK AND RESPONDING TO CUSTOMERS

LOCATION AND DATES:

April-June 2018

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

As part of the Planning Services commitment to communication and engagement with customers, the Service carried out a further Customer Survey at the end of the 2017/2018 reporting period.

DM Customer Survey – April 2018

The measurement of outputs and measurable targets for Customer Surveys were applied.

The purpose of this 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 Team Action plans have resulted in a more positive experience; and to identify specific elements of the service provided which are considered to require review.

Overall, improvements have been achieved in the majority of areas as noted below, and it is positive to note that the overall level of customer satisfaction has improved when compared with previous years.

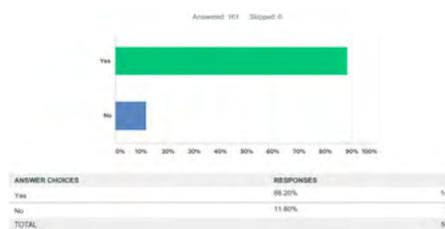
2018:

Satisfied/Fairly Satisfied- 89.6%
Fairly/Very Dissatisfied- 5.7%

2017:

Satisfied/Fairly Satisfied- 82.3%
Fairly/ Very Dissatisfied- 10.2%

Q15: DID THE COUNCIL DEAL WITH YOUR APPLICATION WITHIN THE EXPECTED TIMESCALE:



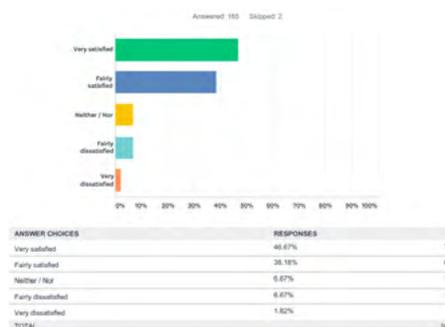
2018:

Yes- 88% No 12%

2017:

Yes: 79.8% No 20.2%

Q16: OVERALL HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE TIME TAKEN TO PROCESS YOUR APPLICATION?



2018:

V Satisfied/F Satisfied- 84.9%
F Dissatisfied/ V Dissatisfied- 8.5%

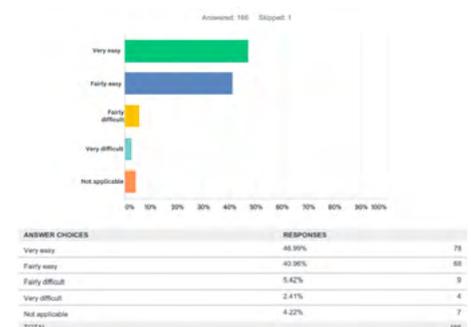
2017:

V Satisfied/F Satisfied- 77.67%
F Dissatisfied/ V Dissatisfied- 12.1%

It is positive to note that measures introduced by the Council to address concerns regarding levels of communication by Planning Officers in the last PPF, in tandem with the roll out of Skype for Business system, has resulted in an increase in level of customer satisfaction. The benefits and contribution that technology can play in maintaining good levels of communication to customers are acknowledged and evident, particularly when Planning staff continue to work between different locations and undertake cross team working on a more regular basis during this reporting period. The Council will continue to monitor levels of communication in relation to response times for calls and messages and discuss any specific concerns at team meetings.

Furthermore, it is noted that levels of satisfaction experienced by customers when communicating with Planning Officers and in seeking progress updates has improved and remains above the 80% satisfaction/very satisfied bracket:

Q11: HOW EASY WAS IT TO CONTACT THE PLANNING OFFICER DEALING WITH YOUR PLANNING APPLICATION?



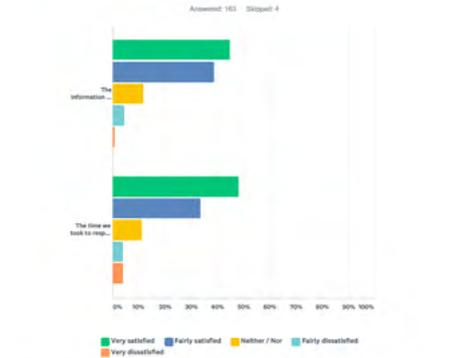
2018:

V Easy/ F Easy- 88%
F Difficult/ V Difficult- 6.6%

2017:

V Easy/ F Easy- 80.4%
F Difficult/ V Difficult- 13.5%

Q12: HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE FOLLOWING:



	VERY SATISFIED	FAIRLY SATISFIED	NEITHER / NOT	FAIRLY DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
The information you received on the progress of your application?	73	63	18	7	1	163
The time we took to respond to your messages, letters or emails?	77	54	18	6	8	163

2017:

V Satisfied/ F Satisfied- 80.2%
F Dissatisfied/ V Dissatisfied- 4.69%

The time taken to respond to messages, letters or emails?

2018:

V Satisfied/F Satisfied- 81.4%
F Dissatisfied/ V Dissatisfied- 7.5%

2017:

V Satisfied/ F Satisfied- 80.5%
F Dissatisfied/ V Dissatisfied- 7.8%

GOALS:

The main goals of this annual Survey are 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 Team Action plans have resulted in a more positive experience; and to identify specific elements of the service provided which are considered to require review.

OUTCOMES:

The Customer Survey results for this reporting period demonstrate that the measures adopted by the Planning Service have secured an improvement in the level of satisfaction for the majority of areas which were the subject of the survey.

There are however specific areas where there remains scope for further improvements to be undertaken and it appears that customers are still experiencing concerns with. The promotion of pre-application advice at local and major levels was identified as an area requiring improvement and it is disappointing to note that the uptake on pre-application advice and usefulness of the advice has dipped during the reporting period, particularly when 96% of the customers received an approval and satisfaction levels for the overall service received by customers when dealing with their application was recorded at 89.6%.

Q8: DID YOU SEEK PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE PRIOR TO SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION?



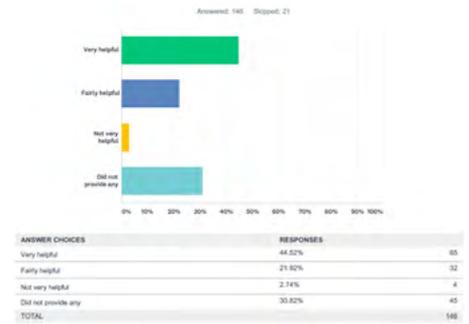
2018:

Yes- 53% No 47%

2017:

Yes- 63% No 34%

Q9: THINKING SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS, HOW HELPFUL WERE WE IN PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT?



2018:

V Helpful/ F Helpful- 66.4%
Not very Helpful- 2.74%

2017:

V Helpful/F Helpful- 81.1%
Not Very Helpful 4.3%

The Customer Survey demonstrates that the Planning Service are correct to maintain focus on a review of the pre-application process in terms of the quality of advice provide and timescales. A Review of the pre-application service remains an ongoing Service priority which the Planning Service acknowledge requires to be completed as part of an ongoing improvement project. There is also an awareness that any updates to the process will need to align with any measures introduced via the Planning Bill. The progress achieved in relation to the pre-application process will be reported in the next PPF reporting period.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Chris Ormiston, Team Manager (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 37: RESPONDING TO CUSTOMER FEEDBACK/NEEDS - E PLANNING

LOCATION AND DATES:

January 2018 – Stonehaven

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 – Decision making
- 3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies

OVERVIEW:

The e-Planning Team were frequently spending a disproportionate amount of time manually uploading items being sent by e mail from Agents rather than making good use of the e-Planning and Building Standards portals and electronic systems. After communicating with users an information leaflet was sent out to all agents/applicants to encourage more use as the online facility/portal to enable quicker submissions. This has proved to be very successful and meant that information was getting to the Case Officer quicker and vastly reduced the processing time. Communication with agents also highlighted an issue on the restriction on file sizes and them only being able to upload one file at a time. This concern was relayed to the Scottish Government to be considered as future Portal improvements, however in the interim advice was given on how the Council could assist on submission of large files over 5MB. Firstly, an e mail was sent to all agents from the Planning Service Manager and the Building Standards Service Manger highlighting

the issue and the assistance we could provide. This was followed up by an **Advice Leaflet**.

GOALS:

To listen to customers and to assist where possible in addition to advising on the best way forward to the application submission process appreciating that no everyone wants to or can embrace technology.

OUTCOMES:

A quick solution was enabled to address an issue identified by staff and thus continue to follow up on a previous commitment to seek out those customers not using the e-Planning System. Also, the team established a good work around to an issue outwith the control of the Service and one which was appreciated by agents etc until resolved by the Scottish Government.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Audrey Smith – E Planning Supervisor

GOVERNANCE

The new **Council Plan (2017 - 2022)** was approved in November 2017 based on the 11 priorities that set out the direction of the Council and its delivery of services based on those priorities but also looking at delivery in new and more efficient ways.

Throughout the reporting year new Elected Member training took place, and the 'One Council' approach gathered strength as more joint working and collaboration became the norm. Innovative ways of working with

stakeholders, to learn from one another is evidenced in the Case Studies below as is the constant need to acknowledge changing environments in the use of lean processes and the aligning of resources.



Council Priorities
- Good Governance

CASE STUDY 38: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT/POLICY INTERACTION IN MAIN ISSUES REPORT (MIR)

LOCATION AND DATES:

Cruden Community Council Meeting at Cruden Parish Church Hall 15 November 2017

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE

THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

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 Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement

- Placemaking
- Place Standard

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Public (inc. Community Councils)
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Interaction between Planning Service Officers representing Development Management and Policy in the preparation of the Main Issues Report for the 2021 Local Development Plan (LDP) resulting in Development Management having a greater stake in the Plan.

GOALS:

The Case Study demonstrated inter Team working between Development Management and Policy Sections in the Main Issues Report stage of the LDP. This has allowed Development Management to have greater ownership of the next Plan.

OUTCOMES:

As part of the preparation for the Main Issues Report for the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, Officers undertook an extensive round of consultations with over 60 meetings with Community Councils across Aberdeenshire to establish what these communities felt about where they lived. The meetings consisted of using the Place Standards tool to score what was perceived to work, or not, within their areas.

Representatives of the Development Management Section, including an Officer who had Senior Policy experience,

assisted at a number of these meetings. The benefits of such an approach allowed Officers, in attendance, to address and comment on both Development Management and policy specific issues arising from the Communities during the consultations. Staff in Development Management Section also gained an important insight to the aspirations of the communities and where also they had concerns.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Alan Davidson, Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 39: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH/PLANNING LIAISON

LOCATION AND DATES:

Regular liaison through formal forum and regular informal meetings with Environmental Health

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

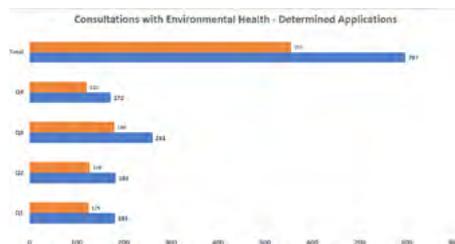
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (EHO's)

OVERVIEW:

The work from previous years involving regular liaison with a key consultee, Environmental Health, has continued in the reporting period. In the period further liaison has taken place resulting in a greater understanding of each other's processes and has resulted in a refinement of the existing protocol and work on complaint management. Both Development Management and Environmental Health have attended each other's training events and this shall continue as we move forward.

GOALS:

Environmental Health, as a key consultee, were consulted nearly 800 times in the reporting period with 70% of all



processed applications having a response from the consultee within 14 days.

It has been pivotal to the efficient management of the consultation process that correct and timeous consultations are issued and that meaningful communication is taking place between Development Management and Environmental Health Case Officers to resolve issues, to identify the relevant service roles and to ensure that competent recommendations are being made.

Inter-service liaison will continue with a view to improving the service given to customers.

OUTCOMES:

The review of the [protocol](#) and the other work undertaken has resulted in a clearer understanding of the need to improve performance and to manage complaints (primarily from turbines and biomass) more effectively. Work will continue in this field moving forward.

Regular liaison between management in Development Management and Environmental Health continues. In terms of performance 70% of consultations were responded to within the set timescales. The means of measurement has changed from previous years in that it is now applications determined as opposed to applications valid to give a clearer picture. Nonetheless the level of service received from this key consultee has improved. This matter was raised as part of the discussion within the liaison group.

Further work has been done in odour control and intensive livestock in planning applications and, consequently, as part of a continuous review, the existing protocol has been updated. This liaison has also resulted in the preparation of a guidance note on when planning permission or Prior Notification is required for Biomass installations ([see separate Case Study 41](#)). Subsequent to this we have engaged with Environmental Health to ensure, as part of routine monitoring, our [Model Planning Conditions](#) are fit for purpose. Recent work has taken place to review our "biomass" model planning conditions.

We have also contributed to work the Environmental Health Service are doing around the area of air quality in planning applications.

Work relating to complaints has taken place with both Services and a complaint process has been devised and rolled out. This has resulted in better cross Service working and collaboration around the area of complaints and has resulted in refining of Model Planning Conditions.

Work continues around complaint management and ultimately enforcement and our Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health Teams continue to work closely to, where possible, deliver solutions.

In April 2017 at one of our biannual Development Management Training Days an [interactive presentation](#) was given by an Environmental Health Officer on the subject of private water supplies. A reciprocal arrangement saw Development Management staff attend an earlier Environmental Health training session and both Services are committed to continued cross-Service working.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Darren Ross - Team Manager

CASE STUDY 40: SERVICE COLLABORATION & SOLUTION SEEKING - TRANSPORTATION/ROADS & PLANNING LIAISON

LOCATION AND DATES:

Regular liaison meetings and informal meetings with Transportation/Roads and Planning and attendance at internal training days

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

The working arrangements from previous years continues with regular liaison and communication between the Transportation/Roads and Planning Services to review working practices and encourage the efficient, effective and consistent handling of planning applications. During this period, focus remains on Designing Streets National planning policy and the sharing of best practice between developers, agents and consulting engineers. Transportation colleagues have attended an internal training day for Planning staff and this information sharing approach shall continue.

GOALS:

A key goal during the reporting period has been to ensure that the Roads Engineers are engaged in the early stages of the pre-application process and attend meetings with developers and agents. This approach means that the streetscape can be designed out in a way which considers the safety and practical considerations of how the street will be used and maintained and to try and assist developers by avoiding any costly and time-consuming layout revisions later in the design process.

In tandem, and with a view to improving collaborative working and information sharing, discussions have taken place to utilise the Uniform System to ensure that relevant site history and correspondence is shared between the Transportation/Roads and Planning Services to improve communication between the Services on site specific roads and planning related matters.

OUTCOMES:

The ongoing liaison has resulted in a better understanding and awareness of the value that can be added via early engagement and has resulted in an improved level of communication and engagement between the Services. The regular liaison meeting provides a positive forum to allow operational matters to be reviewed and actions agreed with a view to securing improved cross Service working. Moving forward there remains an ongoing commitment of the liaison group to focus on working practices and engagement with developers and agents, the development of the Uniform System and staff training as part of these improvement works.

[Link to Case Study 57 - Using Technology to Improve Pre-application Engagement](#)

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Peter MacCallum - Transportation Manager

CASE STUDY 41 - HILL OF BANCHORY BIOMASS – LESSONS LEARNED IN INTRODUCING BIOMASS AND COMMUNITY HEATING

LOCATION AND DATES:

Hill of Banchory, Banchory – Visit on 22 August 2017

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

- Governance
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across services

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Economic Development
- Sustainability
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Sharing Good Practice and Collective Learning

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

As a result of the networking opportunities that were arising from the collaborative pre-application designing streets work with local developer Bancon at Hill of Banchory, key Council Officers were offered the opportunity to see the biomass community heating scheme that was in place and operating at the Hill of Banchory site. The key Officers for the Council included the Head of Planning and Building Standards, the Transportation Manager and the Development Management Planning Manager. The scheme has been in existence for some years and each new phase of development has been connected to the community heating network.

GOALS:

The goal here was to build upon collaborative engagement between a local developer and key Council Officers in different Services. The main objective also being to share knowledge

and understanding of a development type that meets wider objectives of economic development and sustainability.

OUTCOMES:

Bancon were able to explain the practicalities of how the scheme operated and gave some insight into the infrastructure and running costs of community heating, and the contractual arrangements needed for householders to be connected. They also explained the practicalities of sourcing a reliable supply of biomass fuel.

The information and feedback provided by the developer was valuable to the Council Officers in that they are now able to provide other developers and Elected Members of the Council with better advice when considering similar heating schemes in other development areas.

HILL OF BANCHORY BIOMASS PLANT



NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Peter MacCallum - Transportation Manager

CASE STUDY 42 - FLEXIBLE RESOURCES AND WORKING PATTERNS - EXAMPLE OF BENEFITS OF ICT TECHNOLOGY TO FACILITATE HOME WORKING AND MAINTAIN SERVICE DELIVERY DURING EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

LOCATION AND DATES:

February 2018

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

- Governance
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications

- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training
- Online Systems
- Flexible working patterns

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

During the PPF reporting year the review of staffing and team needs associated with technology continues and has been invaluable in allowing staff to continue to work flexibly and efficiently. The benefits of ensuring that all members of staff have the correct ICT equipment to enable them to perform their duties was demonstrated by a Planning Technician within one of the Development Management Area Teams who resides in a rural location.

At the beginning of the year, and prior to the severe wintry weather conditions experienced in February 2018, the member of staff was assigned a laptop as part of a review of ICT needs based on staff roles and responsibilities undertaken within the Service. This move towards a more flexible approach to work supported by relevant ICT and Skype system allowed the member of staff to continue to work during this period and provide a service to the public without having to take a leave of absence.

The use of technology and resources available meant that the level of Service delivery and performance was maintained during this severe weather period. The member of staff was able

to avoid unnecessary travel during this period and utilise the Uniform and mapping systems to undertake their normal duties and remain in contact with colleagues and customers via Skype to ensure that the level of service delivery to the customers was not diminished during this period.

GOALS:

To ensure that staff within the Development Management Section continue to be suitably resourced to facilitate flexible working and the delivery of an efficient and effective customer service.

To monitor and test the use of new technology and methods of flexible and cross Team working to ensure that the Development Management Section is suitably resourced and robust.

OUTCOMES:

The review and use of ICT technology aligned to requirements of specific staffing needs demonstrates the benefits that can be realised via flexible working patterns in terms of service delivery and staff wellbeing.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Chris Ormiston, Team Manager (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 43 - ELECTED MEMBER INDUCTION TRAINING

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council HQ & Area Offices
- May 2017

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Elected Member training
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Skills Sharing
- Interdisciplinary Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Elected Members

OVERVIEW:

Following the local Council elections in 2017 an extensive programme of induction was set up by the Council's Business Services. As part of that there were 2 Mandatory Planning Inductions sessions.

Agenda - Familiarisation Day - 9th May 2017
**30 MINUTES - MAIRI STEWART & TEAM
MANAGER & COMMITTEE OFFICER**

Planning application process following Member Notification through Ward Pages - brief introduction of what a Member needs to know to deal with a planning application.

On the 9 May 2017 there was a Familiarisation Day with the Members and Directors of all Services.

Planning was given a very short slot on that day, which took Members through the very basics of what they needed to know to deal with planning applications, on the basis that they would be immediately receiving applications (Member consultations) from 8 May through the Member Ward Pages. Thus, it was considered vital that they were made familiar with the process of decision making and what they needed to do to respond to planning consultations received via Ward Pages, as part of their role as decision makers. The urgency was based on both their need to know how to respond and that there was no provision made for delays in the statutory planning decision making process which had to continue despite the election.

Planning Induction Day - 15th May 2017

This part of the induction was to introduce and make Members aware of the entire Planning function in more detail and allow questions to be asked. The Director, Head of Service and two of the Managers facilitated the afternoon with **presentations**. Again, planning is one topic that Members will find themselves involved in frequently both through the public and via Committee, so it was considered important that they were given this induction very early on and given all the relevant information. As such it was made mandatory for new Members to attend. This was to reflect the regulatory, statutory and strategic nature of planning and the importance of the statutory timescales in the decision-making process.

This was followed by various area inductions where again planning was involved.

Offers of further training/inductions were made to those Members who missed the mandatory planning inductions. A Planning Manager was part of an informal training session carried out with three Members who missed the induction training. This was held on the morning of 25 May in Ellon. The Director of Business

Services led the event. Also attending were others from other Services. The Planning Manager discussed all aspects of Planning including Service structure, main parts of planning they would come across and planning applications.

In addition to the corporate sessions, area sessions took place, arranged by the Area Managers' Teams with the Planning Service represented by the respective Planning Team Managers and Seniors. [An Area Induction Programme](#) was collated and issued. These sessions reiterated the planning process and the role of the Area Committee. Also covered were examples

of [specific area issues](#) that the new Members required to be made aware of. These sessions were accompanied by the relevant power point presentations – both [generic](#) and [area based](#).

GOALS:

To make new Elected Members aware and remind existing Members of where in their Council role the planning system fits in. The induction and further training is to ensure that to fully understand and implement the planning decision making process will enable good sound and competent planning outcomes. Part of this is to review and monitor

decisions taken and communicate closely with the Elected Members should they required further training and/or updates.

OUTCOMES:

Elected Members – both new and existing fully briefed on all aspects of their Council role and made fully aware of their role in the decision-making process for planning applications, which forms a large part of their role.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Mairi Stewart - Planning Service Manager

CASE STUDY 44: IMPLEMENTATION OF DELEGATED POWERS UNDER THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF GOVERNANCE FOR REFUSAL OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS WHERE THERE HAS BEEN A FAILURE TO AGREE SECTION 75 LEGAL AGREEMENTS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Following Full Council and Scottish Government approval the new powers came into force in January 2017. Process of implementation from May 2017 onwards.

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 – Decision Making
- 4 – Legal Agreements
- 14 – Delivering development – stalled sites/legacy cases

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developer
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

As part of the Council's on-going Strategic Governance Review, and through collaborative working with colleagues in the Council's Legal and Governance Service, this project has progressed the implementation of additional delegated powers of refusal for Officers on planning applications where Section 75 Legal Agreements have not been agreed with applicants within defined time periods (4 months for local applications and 6 months for major applications).

Following Full Council and subsequent Scottish Government approval, the new powers contained in the Council's Scheme of Governance came into force in January 2017. The Planning Service has worked closely with the Legal and Governance Service to devise working processes and relevant guidance notes for the implementation of the additional powers.

Following consultation with relevant planning staff, these working processes which include template letters to be used on Uniform at the relevant stages of the process and the guidance notes for staff and Elected Members have now been completed. Staff awareness has been instigated recently through a Development Management Training Day in advance of formal roll out.

As part of a wider project, there is recognition of the requirement to provide Service-wide improvements to the processes and timescales for the completion of Section 75 Legal Agreements. This is to improve overall decision-making timescales on both local and major planning applications where Legal Agreements are required. It is also to reduce the number of legacy cases currently registered with the Council and minimise the potential for further legacy cases being created. This provides a fit with key areas of work relating to efficient development management procedures including improved project management; performance monitoring; process improvements; and collaborative working between Services and including Elected Members.

OUTCOMES:

This project has demonstrated continued collaborative working between Council Services and the provision of clear [guidance](#) for staff and a [briefing note](#) for Elected Members on a new process. Full Council in agreeing to the additional powers added an element to the recommended process to include consultation with local ward Members on applications where Officers considered it necessary to use their delegated powers. The practicalities and operational processes of this required

further collaborative consideration hence the need for the detailed guidance notes for both staff and Elected Members. The implementation of the process has not been completed or formally rolled out yet. The next stages include formally advising the Elected Members, and planning and legal agents, of the implementation of the powers, formally issuing the guidance notes to staff, and updating the Uniform System with the required standard template letters

NAME OF KEY OFFICER:

Neil C Stewart, Team Manager (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 45 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING HUB MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various Sites: Jan'18-Ongoing

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

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

13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge

14 – Delivering development – stalled sites/legacy cases

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

The delivery of affordable housing is an ongoing challenge in Aberdeenshire. The Scottish Government has set a target of 50,000 affordable homes to be delivered across Scotland between 2016 and 2021 which is a significant increase on previous parliamentary aims and has also provided significant funding to help meet this target. [The Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023](#) sets an ambitious target of 425 affordable units to be delivered each year by Aberdeenshire Council and its local and national RSL partners. [The Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018-2023](#) identifies opportunities for this target to be achieved but is heavily reliant on the build-out rate of the development industry. Around 70% of the sites in the Plan form part of Section 75 Agreements with developers. In light of the fall in the oil price and the slow-down in the housing

market, much of the previously anticipated development may not come forward during this window of opportunity while there is affordable housing grant available.

To try and improve the level of housing delivery the Planning Information and Delivery Team has been assisting colleagues in the Housing Service to implement a HUB style liaison model for greater lines of communication between Housing Associations and other affordable housing providers and the Council.

It is proposed that the HUB would meet regularly to identify housing needs, building opportunities, and issues delaying delivery on sites across Aberdeenshire. There are cases where issues are delaying delivery, even on consented sites, and sometimes within the Council, for example Roads Construction Consent applications, ransom strips, etc. The collaborative style of working can benefit all involved by sharing knowledge and experience and presenting opportunities to form partnerships to achieve mutual outcomes.

GOALS:

It is hoped that by sharing best practice and working collaboratively that Planning and Housing Teams can work with stakeholders to meet the required level of delivery of affordable housing.

OUTCOMES:

The Planning Information and Delivery Team are well placed to facilitate these types of meetings as we have gained significant experience in co-ordinating Project Team meetings for specific developments where various stakeholders and developers are brought together regularly to promote communication and reduce potential delays/ issues throughout the project. This model of streamlined working supports the One Council approach that is being promoted by the Council.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER:

David MacLennan -Team Leader (Planning Information & Delivery)/Ally MacLeod – Housing Manager

CASE STUDY 46 - PUBLICATION OF DEVELOPER OBLIGATIONS INFORMATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Throughout 2016/17

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

- 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 Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

A common concern raised by our communities when analysing feedback from last year's Developer Obligations Roadshow was the lack of information available to the public about the developer obligations funds and how these funds are spent. While the reasons for securing infrastructure contributions through the developer obligations process is detailed in each planning application Committee Report or Report of Handling, details relating to contribution amounts have not historically been disclosed.

To address this matter, the Developer Obligations and Planning Development Management Teams have agreed a protocol to publicise [Developer Obligations Assessment Reports](#). Developer Obligations Assessment Reports outline the package of developer obligation contributions secured for qualifying planning applications.

In addition to publicising information about the level of contributions secured a protocol for publicising a quarterly Report on the spending of developer obligations contributions has also been agreed. The [Report](#) shall provide details of the infrastructure project and the origins of the developer obligations funds that have financed the project.

We believe that the publication of this information inspires confidence in the developer obligations process, promotes transparency in the work of the Developer Obligations Team and highlights the partnership approach to infrastructure delivery between the Local Authority, developers and land owners in Aberdeenshire.

DEVELOPER OBLIGATIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT

SUMMARY OF OBLIGATIONS	
Infrastructure	£3,887.00
Primary Education	£100
Secondary Education	£100
Community Facilities	£1,000
Sports & Recreation	£1,000
Healthcare	£2,487.00
Total Infrastructure	£3,887.00

DEVELOPER OBLIGATIONS EXPENDITURE BROCHURE



GOALS:

To increase transparency in the developer obligations process by making developer obligations assessment reports public once the respective planning application has been determined.

To increase transparency in the way Developer Obligations funds are spent and to highlight the partnership approach adopted by the Council and developers in the delivery of infrastructure.

OUTCOMES:

This process is still in its infancy. However, local community groups and neighbourhood representation structures as well as Elected Members have contacted the Developer Obligations Team to gain a better understanding of the types of infrastructure that can be delivered by developer obligations and infrastructure projects that developers have contributed towards in their local area.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Paul Macari, Principal Developer Obligations Officer

CASE STUDY 47: LEAN PROCESSES THROUGH DIGITISATION – PROGRESSING TO A PAPERLESS ENVIRONMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Stonehaven – E Planning Team - reporting year – 2017-18

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 – Decision Making
- 6 – Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

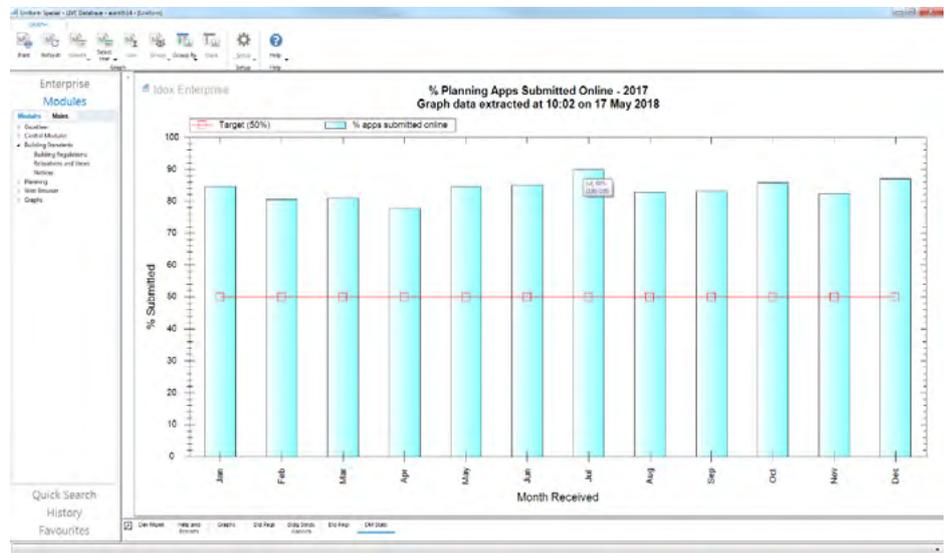
- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

The e Planning Team continue to process all workflows to the next stage within tight timescales, the online percentages of Electronic Online submissions continue to improve to around 90%. The aim of being a paperless office getting even closer.

This reporting year saw the introduction of two phases of achieving the paperless environment. The aim was to reduce printing costs and to encourage Case Officers to rely less on paper plans and to make use of electronic equipment to assess applications. **Phase 1** was introduced by stopping printing all Householder Applications towards the end of 2017. **Phase 2** was also rolled out in the reporting period to reduce even more on costs and cease all printing requests by the end of the Financial Year. Printing of paper drawings was to be for exceptional cases only.

CHART ABOVE SHOWS THE PERCENTAGE OF PLANNING ONLINE SUBMISSIONS FOR 2017



The chart above shows the reduction on printing requests for the reporting period (January to March 2017 and 2018). Costs have also been significantly reduced.

	JAN TO MAR 2017	JAN TO MAR 2018
Size	Amount	Amount
Up to A3	88	59
A2	399	218
A1	1275	880
A0	90	121

A **commitment** from 2017-18 service improvements (in PPF 2016-17) was to implement site visit technology which is directly associated with the aim to become paperless. Due to technical circumstances outwith the Council's control, issues with the roll out of the appropriate app to enable electronic devices to be fully used on site has delayed the full implementation of site visit technology. Surface pro tablets are being piloted by both Building Standards and some Planning staff with a view to a full roll out once the technical issues have been resolved. The demand for paper

drawings has still, despite this setback, been vastly reduced with Officers using either desktop storage of plans or relying on significantly less paper to use whilst on site.

GOALS:

To embrace digitisation of the planning process to an extent where a paperless environment is created, through the increased use of on-line planning facilities by customers and less reliance on paper plans by Officers. New on-site technology is available, and the goal is to seek full reliance on this to carry out site visits and assessments.

OUTCOMES:

To date the efforts to become paperless have been promising with a high level of success. Significantly more customers are using the on-line planning facility and similarly most of our stakeholders communicate on-line. The roll out of the two phases of reducing printing has resulted in the reduction of costs and the numbers of printing requests by staff. The commitment to fully implement on-site technology will continue into the next reporting year.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Audrey Smith, E-Planning Supervisor

CASE STUDY 48 - BUDGET MONITORING, REVIEW AND AWARENESS

LOCATION AND DATES:

On-going throughout the reporting year 2017-18

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Driving Improved Performance - Continuous improvements
12 - Simplifying and Streamlining - corporate working

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Interdisciplinary Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

The budget is obviously of prime importance to the Council and the delivery of all its services. The input and collaborative working between all the Services and the Finance Team is vital in seeking the best possible budget outcomes for the Council.

Council Leader Jim Gifford said: *"Our challenge as a Council remains: we face difficult financial times, but we have a plan. It's a plan that encapsulates all areas of our business, through revenue, capital, housing and reserves. It is a multi-year plan, a plan that tries to forecast how the financial position is likely to change in the years ahead; a plan that considers the impact of increasing pressure on our services as a result of a growing and ageing population; and a plan that considers the buildings and facilities that we will need operate in over the next five decades."*

The Planning Service input from Manager level upwards:

BUDGET SAVINGS & INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Service Managers were required to complete budget templates that would be used to inform Members of the aims and objective and performance of each service with a view to considering budget setting and associated savings.

Service Managers from the Planning Service meet regularly with their accountant to monitor and review staffing numbers and budget lines.

All staff however must be made aware of the Council budget, how it is set and the associated pressures and implications for their day to day work:

BUDGET SETTING AND STAFF AWARENESS

Budgets affect all aspects of Council work and the day to day operation of staff doing their jobs. All staff require to be made aware of the budget process, how and why the budget is set as it is and the implications of working within an agreed budget. Corporate information was shared with all planning staff in awareness sessions throughout the Service. [Slides](#) prepared by the Corporate Communications Team were prepared as a tool to keep Teams informed and for Managers to walk their team through the budget papers being presented to [Full Council](#), their meaning and the implications.

GOALS:

To give cognisance to the Council's main priorities in relation to the Planning Service in terms of the budget and the associated pressures and implications on staff and the services they provide.

OUTCOMES:

The work taken place has demonstrated the importance of input to budget making by senior staff, to address pressures and potential future constraints on delivering a service. It also demonstrates how staff at all levels need to be aware of how the budget is set and the implications for them as those at the front line delivering the service.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER:

Planning Service Managers

CASE STUDY 49 - FOCUS ON IMPROVING LEGACY LEVELS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House - HQ - Reporting Period - 2017-18

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Driving Improved Performance - Continuous improvement

- showing progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators

14 - Delivering Development - 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

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House – HQ – Reporting Period – 2017-18

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING

SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

6 – Driving Improved Performance – Continuous improvement – showing progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators
14 – Delivering Development – Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year old.

LEGACY TEAM

The Legacy Co-ordinator, who 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. Regular meetings, improved communication between the Legal and Planning Teams, and lessons learned have increased the efficiency of concluding applications.

During the period March 2017 – March 2018 a total of 9 legacy applications were concluded. The table below shows how many legacy applications are outstanding as at the end of March 2018 compared with the 2017 figures.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TOTAL
Complaints	1	1	2	1	4	1	-	10
Service Requests	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	9

There is a continued focus in the Planning Teams to minimise future applications becoming 'legacy'. Planners are more aware of the issue of legacy applications and are using Processing Agreements and 'stop the clock' mechanisms where appropriate. Processing Agreements are sought as a matter of course for more complex applications but applicants do not always agree to enter into an Agreement despite the benefits in terms of agreeing how the application will be processed including timescales. Additionally, the Legacy Co-ordinator issues monthly '**Legacy Monitoring' emails** to Team Leaders 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. All information is collated into a **Legacy Mastersheet** which allows the monitoring of the applications with potential to become legacy (early warning) and those which are legacy cases with a view of getting them determined.

AN EXAMPLE OF LEGACY PREVENTION:

The monthly 'Legacy Monitoring' identifies planning applications that are soon to become legacy applications and this, along with regular communication with Planning Officers and Legal colleagues, enables the Legacy Co-ordinator to prioritise applications that would benefit from assistance. The Legacy Co-ordinator provides extra support, for example, by contacting other Services within the Council for

details of the issues that are delaying an application or facilitating a meeting for targeted discussions to take place. By starting this process as early as possible, some applications are prevented from becoming legacies.

GOALS:

To continue to focus on reducing legacy cases further and ultimately prevent any new legacy cases from arising. Within that overarching goal is further work on the appropriate use of Planning Processing Agreements and stop the clock as mechanisms of prevention. Balance is also required between supporting developers during economically difficult times and preventing legacy cases from arising.

OUTCOMES:

In summary - there is continued focus on concluding existing legacy cases and this last year has seen 9 older applications concluded and a slight reduction in the overall total from 10 to 9 remaining cases. However, there are still new applications becoming legacy where a Processing Agreement has not been a possibility and there is still work to be done to communicate and promote the usefulness of this tool to developers as a number do not wish to enter into these Agreements. There is also scope for wider use of the 'stop the clock' mechanism as a way of preventing applications becoming legacy. The Legacy Co-ordinator has had recent discussions with Legal colleagues regarding this tool as the Legal Team are able to advise the Planning Officers of instances where this would be appropriate if legal negotiations have stalled.

Of the remaining legacy cases, there are several underlying reasons for the delays in concluding the applications. Aberdeenshire Council has been supporting local developers through the difficult economic climate and there are examples of where a developer has submitted a planning application but then tactically delays the conclusion of the application to extend the time they must allow the market to pick up. In these circumstances, the applicant is often very reluctant to sign a Processing Agreement which would tie them down to a potentially unfavourable timescale for them. Other examples of delays include poor communication from the applicants' agent, in some cases so significant that it takes several months of chasing to get any response. There are also several technical difficulties that can arise through the progression of a project that could not be anticipated at the outset which means additional surveys/ meetings are required, often out with the control of Aberdeenshire Council. Similarly, when an application proceeds to S75 negotiations, issues can be identified with title deeds or the Legal Agreement might need to be signed off by the applicants' lender both of which can add several months to the timescales. It is very uncommon now to have two legacy applications with the same issues which indicates that lessons are being learned over time.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kirsty Black, Project Officer Planning, Information & Delivery

CASE STUDY 50 - PLANNING ENFORCEMENT: AN EXAMPLE OF JOINED-UP WORKING BETWEEN COUNCIL SERVICES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Alford, Aberdeenshire 2017 - 2018

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

- Governance - Strong collaboration between Services and joint working arrangements

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Skills sharing
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Authority Other Staff (Environmental Health)
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

ALLEGED BREACH

The Planning Enforcement Team initially received a complaint via the Environmental Health Service in April 2017, which primarily was regarding noise resulting from an alleged unauthorised operation of a recreational clay pigeon shooting business. The complaint also raised issues of noise (as a statutory nuisance) and impact of the development on private water supply which are matters that Environmental Health were to investigate independently. Given the minimal information that was submitted along with the complaint and having discussed the allegation with the subject it was concluded that there was no evidence to suggest at that time that the activity comprised a material change of use of land. Both the subject and complainant were advised to keep a diary of when any shooting activity was taking place. Subsequently, in Nov 2017 a further complaint was received advising that the shooting days had exceeded the 28 days temporary use limit (as per the criteria defined under Class 15 of the Town and



Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 as amended). The allegation was backed up by dates of the shooting activity. Submissions of the dates of shooting activity from the complainer and subject were cross-referenced and the outcome identified there were 25 dates in the year on which the landowner said he was shooting clay pigeons recreationally which coincided with the records of the complainant.

OUTCOMES:

On this basis, it was concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to pursue a breach of Planning control. The conclusion on the planning position along with the justification was provided to the Environmental Health Service to input into the final response to the complainants. The enforcement case was subsequently closed, and the subject was advised to continue recording shooting activity so that the information could feed into any future complaints.

A subsequent Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) complaint on the same confirmed that the SPSO had not seen any evidence of fault or failure in the way in which the Council had reached their decision on the enforcement investigation. The SPSO also endorsed the decision-making process that had been followed by the Environmental Health Service in coming to the conclusions that the activity was not a statutory nuisance with regards noise nor of its impact on

contamination of private water supplies. Based on the Council's handling of the case, the SPSO decided not to investigate the complaint.

GOALS:

The overall aim here was to provide a comprehensive response to the subject of the complaint that covered all factors raised within the letter of complaint with one Service taking the lead, thereby, providing a quality service and positive customer experience. This would also endorse the working agreement and protocol that is established between the Environmental Health and Planning Services.

The Case Study demonstrates how a relatively simple consultation process has led to an effective joined up approach that was endorsed by the SPSO during their investigations. The case involved analysis of data to come to a reasoned, balanced judgement that is capable of withstanding scrutiny. The outcome was an integral element of a successfully managed project providing collaborative working across Services with one Service taking the lead as per the agreed working protocol. The benefits of joined up working are reaffirmed, and relations are strengthened between Services.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Bob Thomson, Enforcement Officer

CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Infrastructure Services is committed to Best Value and Continuous Improvement. Our approach is embedded in the way we provide service delivery on a day to day basis. During the year we will use the following activities to drive forward transformational change within the service; Benchmarking, Customer

Engagement, Service Improvement Projects, Business System Development, Total Place, Efficient Infrastructure Services for the future, Collaborative Working.

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2017 - 2020



THE PLANNING SERVICE

The reporting period has seen greater focus on corporate working towards improvement and input to the Council's Priorities and 'One Council' approach to delivery. The activities identified in the Infrastructure Services Plan 2017-2020 are already embedded in the work of the service.

The Planning Service have implemented several improvement projects over the various reporting years and monitoring and review of those has been the focus over the reporting period. Best Practice is part of daily operations and the Manual continues as a live document for all

staff. Other improvement projects have continued, some changing direction or morphing into other associated/relevant projects, depending on circumstances, priorities and resources.

A major improvement project has been the re-purposing of the corporate **Future Infrastructure for Services Group (FIRS)** group, a vital collaborative resource to aid future delivery of development and infrastructure in light of the new Local Development Plan and national changes in infrastructure levies and SDPAs through the Planning Bill.

STAFF

As always, the most vital and valuable resource is our staff responsible for the delivery of high quality services and a constant in all aspects of what the Service achieves. Staff training remains a focus as does the retention and development of staff.



DIGITAL

The use of digital means is already relatively advanced within some parts of the Planning Service. Expansion of its use to enable further efficiencies and cross service improvements are on-going.

CASE STUDY 51: SECTION 75 LEGAL AGREEMENTS

- AVOIDING DELAYS - COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Throughout Aberdeenshire and throughout 2017/18

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

4 - Legal agreements: conclude (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
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Scottish Government

OVERVIEW:

During 2017/18 the Conveyancing Team within the Council's Legal Service working along with the Planning Service have continued to develop their Improvement Project aimed at improving performance in determining planning applications with S75 legal agreements. Reviewing and developing previous work, the measures have continued to include;

- the review of the S75 template with explanatory notes;
- the further development and rollout of a master spreadsheet used to record and monitor progress of S75 instructions and key milestones in the process;
- the continued operation of a Legal/ Planning Liaison Group with regular meetings;
- the continued funding by Planning of the post of a dedicated solicitor in the Conveyancing Team dealing with S75 legal agreements;
- the development of the S75 instruction sheet for Planning Officers;
- the assessment of developer obligations being undertaken at an early

stage in the planning process and Heads of Terms being agreed upfront so that there is minimal need to negotiate further if planning permission is to be granted;

- the continued encouragement of S69 agreements (up-front cash payments) where appropriate;
- the encouragement of early instruction of a S75 by Planning Officers where appropriate (where delegated authority to grant is clear);
- a dedicated email address/inbox for S75s in order to separate these from other legal instructions;
- a dedicated officer in the Planning Delivery Team to monitor progress on forthcoming potential legacy cases ([see Case Study 49](#));
- agreed timescales for the completion of S75 agreements being included accurately within Planning Processing Agreements (PPAs);
- the Planning Service progressing with the implementation of processes for refusing under their delegated powers planning applications (under their delegated powers) within 4/6 months where no progress has made ([see Case Study 44](#))
- the development of shared internal training opportunities between Conveyancing, Developer Obligations and Planning team members to foster greater understanding of respective roles in the process but in particular the provision of guidance on the timing and content of S75 Instructions.

GOALS:

The goals with this process were to create an environment of continuous improvement through better project management and engagement between officers, with the ultimate aims of enhancing efficiency in the S75 process and improving planning performance in the determination of planning applications.

OUTCOMES:

The measures continue to form part of, and exceed the measures contained in the 10 point plan for improving S75 timescales promoted by the Scottish Government – [Planning Obligations 10 Good Practice Points](#)

The Council's ongoing improvement work described above forms part of the work being undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Government as part of the

pilot project formed under the National Planning Review to review, streamline and improve its processes in negotiating and securing legal agreements.

In connection with its work under the pilot project a Senior Planning Officer from the Scottish Government has endorsed the improvement work undertaken and the contribution made by Aberdeenshire Council.

"The individuals involved in the streamlining planning obligations improvement project from Aberdeenshire Council have shown strong commitment and enthusiasm towards the project. They have put considerable thought into project aims, and reviewing process using improvement methodology and have come up with a number of relevant and realistic change ideas to streamline the S75 process. Their openness and willingness to share good practice is exemplary and means their work is likely to have implications beyond local authority boundaries."

To focus on two of the specific measures outlined:

INSTRUCTING SECTION 75S - INTERNAL TRAINING/LIAISON

Legal officers have visited each of the Development Management Planning Teams and the Developer Obligations Team to provide guidance on the timing and content of S75 Instructions. The meetings were held in a workshop style where Legal Officers shared good practice and facilitated an open discussion. Development Management Officers were able to highlight practices in this area of work that they felt contributed to efficiency in the determination of planning applications and also practices that they felt were unsuccessful in achieving this outcome.

The workshops highlighted areas for development, areas where practice in instructing S75 Legal Agreements was inconsistent but also areas of good practice that if rolled out across Aberdeenshire would reduce the time taken to conclude S75 Legal Agreements (e.g. issuing S75 Instructions at the first available opportunity rather than only when the application has been determined). This has led to Legal

CASE STUDY 52: MAINTAINING BEST PRACTICE – BEST PRACTICE MANUAL

LOCATION AND DATES:

Internal Shared Drive
First uploads July 2017 – ongoing

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

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of Outcomes
- Governance

KEY MARKERS:

1 – Decision Making
6 – Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

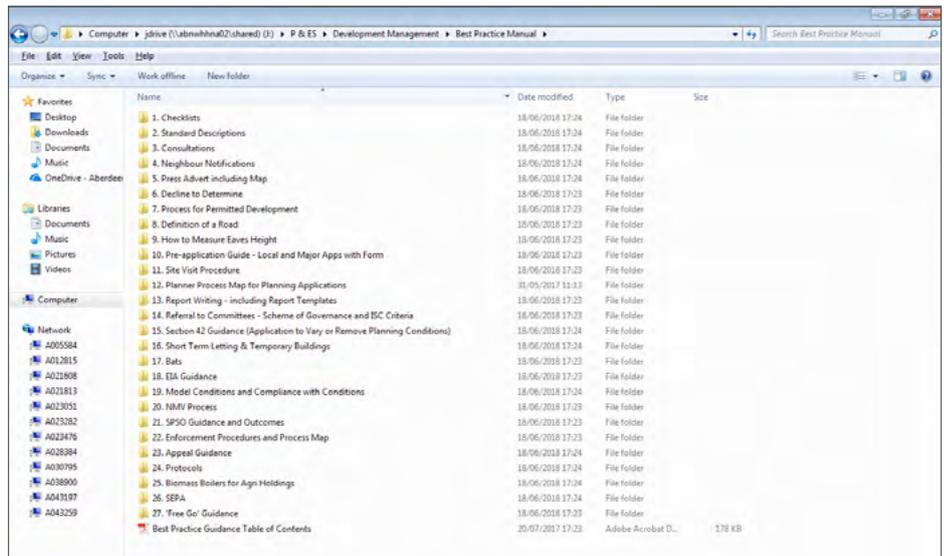
The Development Management Section created a **Best Practice Manual (BPM)** to ensure that all processes and procedures across Aberdeenshire are consistent and follow legislation. This was reported previously, but in this reporting period the BPM has been operational, has been updated and has become an established tool for assisting Planning Technicians and Planners alike in ensuring consistency across a range of Development Management related topics.

GOALS:

The main goals were consistency in approach and to ensure that everyone including new and experienced members of staff were using the same processes. Furthermore, this will result in a more consistent approach for our customers and will aid efficient decision making.

OUTCOMES:

Following on from the introduction of the Best Practice Manual, Aberdeenshire Council have seen a reduction in different processes within our six areas of



Aberdeenshire (one example being each area kept a list of who they consulted – this has now been consolidated into one list in the Best Practice Manual and all staff are using this). This also has meant that any paper copies which were previously held have been destroyed thus helping to create a more paperless office and aids us in remote working where staff from any office can pick up work electronically and aid work flow management.

The Best Practice Manual uses internal information technology processes to ensure that only one copy is kept and allows for document control, thus being time efficient as only one person is required to update the process for all creating a streamlined process.

Planning Technicians, Planners and Senior Planners regularly use this internal reference point, which has created more consistency, reduced time spent explaining procedures and is a 'one stop shop' for Officers to find out the best practice. It covers topics including enquiries, validating, processing an application, Site Visit, Committee procedures, Non-Material Variations and Appeals.

This is a live document which focuses on specific topics which are regularly reviewed and built upon creating certainty, consistency in approach and inter-team working.

One of our experienced Planning Technicians has noted:

“The Manual has saved me so much time, I no longer have to spend time checking that I have the most up to date consultee list as it is always there and as we have a list of standard descriptions it has saved so much time and I know that all of the Technicians are using the same list so our agents/applicants are getting a more consistent approach. Compared to before we had the documents there was considerable scope for inconsistency which, hopefully, is no longer the case”

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Ann Ramsay, Senior Planning Officer

CASE STUDY 53: REVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESSING AGREEMENTS AND STOP THE CLOCK PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS – COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Autumn 2017/Spring 2018

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

- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies (key consultees)
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (key consultees)

OVERVIEW:

During the process of reviewing the current **Stop the Clock (STC)** guidance, as part of an earlier identified Service improvement, it became apparent that this time management tool aligns with the **Planning Process Agreements (PPA)** management tool. As such the focus of STC review was expanded and the remit of the Working Group was revised to include a review of the use of PPAs within the Planning Service.

As part of this ongoing Review, the Working Group looked at all Planning Processing Agreements (PPA) generated throughout 2017 to establish any figures and patterns in relation to the use of PPA's within Aberdeenshire Council. The exercise of continuous improvement can help to further improve on the use of

PPA's from previous years and ensure consistency in service provision. These improvements look to the current process and way of managing planning applications along with an awareness of timescales and how to improve on these. Of importance is to be able to acknowledge that Planners do not become dependent on the use of PPA's and only use them when in accordance with internal best practice guidance.

This Review of the use of PPA's looked predominantly at how many PPA's were entered during 2017, the reasons for entering one, whether they were extended beyond their original extension date, why there were extended and whether the dates of the PPA were met. The results of this assessment will be designed to help to implement a system aimed at producing Guidance Notes on the use of PPA's in the decision-making process within the Development Management Section.

GOALS:

It is acknowledged that the use of Processing Agreements, a recognised and established project management tool, has increased in recent years and the Service aims to ensure, moving forward, a consistent approach to the use of PPA's with a view to both delivering customer care, certainty and effective decision making.

It became apparent that the two project management tools overlap and therefore the STC review will now be taken forward in conjunction with the PPA Review. The aim is to produce updated guidance to inform planners when it is appropriate to apply the Stop the Clock mechanism, or other project management tools such as PPA's. The STC review will continue once the second phase of the PPA review is instructed.

OUTCOMES:

The initial Review of the use of Processing Agreements (the research phase) has been completed and in the coming year we aim to have a clear and coherent process for when PPA's are to be used.

The overall outcome is to produce updated guidance to inform members of the Planning Service when it is appropriate to apply the various project management tools. Additional staff training will be undertaken once the guidance notes have been updated and information on how the Planning Service will apply STC and PPA project management tools will be made available to customers for clarity and consistency in the delivery of the service provided by the Development Management Section in Aberdeenshire.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Jennifer Chalmers, Planner

CASE STUDY 54: COUNCIL-WIDE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STAFF TRAINING DAY

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council Headquarters, Woodhill House, Aberdeen – 6 December 2017

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

- Culture of Continuous Improvement

KEY MARKERS:

6 – Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement 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:

- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Town Centres
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Staff Training
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Key Agencies – Forestry Commission Scotland

OVERVIEW:

As per previous years, it was considered important to continue with the delivery of a **Council-wide Development Management staff training day**. This was held on 6 December 2017 in the Council's Headquarters (Council Chamber). It brought together all Development

Management staff, including, Planning Managers, Team Managers, Senior Planners, Planners, Planning Technicians and Enforcement Officers. Staff from other parts of the Planning Service, including; Planning Policy; Environment; and Planning Information and Delivery were also in attendance.

A full agenda was devised to cover a wide range of topics of relevance to Development Management and wider Council objectives. These were in the main presented by Council staff, but we were also pleased to have representatives from Forestry Commission Scotland who presented one of the topics. Following feedback from previous training days, **presentations** were carried out in an interactive format where possible and one also involved a workshop session. The topics covered included the following:

- Archaeology and the Planning Process
- Affordable Housing
- Town Centre First Principle
- Trees, Woodland and Development
- Update on Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

GOALS:

Having at least one Development Management staff training day a year continues to be considered important to provide opportunities for shared learning, develop staff skills and knowledge and continuous improvement. It also provides social interaction for staff who are geographically spread out across Aberdeenshire in three Development Management Teams, six administrative areas, and different Teams within the wider Planning Service.

In this year, the event was especially important because of the number of new staff members who had joined the Development Management Section.

OUTCOMES:

The training day once again proved successful with feedback sought and received from attendees. The feedback was overall positive about the topics covered and the organisation of the day. It was considered that it would be beneficial to have more workshop sessions, and this is something that has been taken forward in the preparation of the forthcoming year's event(s).

As a result, Development Management staff and others have been able to enhance their knowledge of the topics covered and gained valuable CPD activity. This has helped improve the quality of decision making on development proposals and as such allowed improved quality of service provision to customers and collaborative working internally and externally.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Darren Ross, Team Manager, Development Management
Chris Ormiston, Team Manager, Development Management
Neil C Stewart, Team Manager, Development Management
Wendy Forbes, Team Manager, SDDT

CASE STUDY 55: CLASS 67: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS CODE OPERATORS BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

LOCATION AND DATES:

June – September 2017

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:

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Elected Members

OVERVIEW:

Prior to the implementation of the amendment to Class 67: Electronic Communications Code Operators of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended) in July 2017 and in response to specific cases that the Planning Service had to process in the Banff & Buchan and Marr areas during this period that generated public interest a short life working group comprising of members of the Development Management Section was set up.

The remit of this working group was to review and update the Prior Notification guidance and procedures to ensure that the internal procedures were up to date. By doing so it was also important to ensure that members of staff in the Development Management Section had a clear understanding of the amendments and implications and that they would be able to explain the changes and implications to the public and Elected Members.

GOALS:

The key aims of the working group were to ensure that guidance notes and advice would be made available to staff within the Planning Service, Elected Members and members of the public as necessary, and to produce guidance for inclusion in the Planning Service Best Practice Manual and public website.

The preparation of this information was considered important to clearly set out the remit and requirements under Class 67 and to ensure that members of staff were clear on the determination process and to ensure consistency in terms of the process and advice to members of the public and Elected Members.

OUTCOMES:

As part of this working group remit information notes intended for Area Offices and Elected Members were prepared and issued. Similar information notes were prepared for interested members of the public and are ready to be issued to assist in their understanding of these legislative changes, including how the Planning Service will consider and determine the Prior Notification/ Prior Approval for permitted telecommunications developments.

Guidance for inclusion in the Best Practice Manual and public website has been completed and is ready for publication while the working group have provided the relevant template updates to be used with the Planning Service Uniform System to ensure consistency in the operation and implementation of this Prior Notification/Approval process.

The guidance notes have been circulated to members of the Development Management Section and have been the subject of discussion at team meetings to ensure that staff have relevant knowledge and understanding of the legislation and the determination process.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Aoife Murphy, Senior Planner (Development Management)
Louise Smith, Planner (Development Management)
Ian Scott, Planner (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 56: HIGH HEDGES - LEGISLATION AT WORK - HIGH HEDGES WORKING GROUP REVIEW OF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various Aberdeenshire - August 2017 onwards

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement 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:

- Environment
- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Elected Members
- Benchmarking with other Local Authorities

OVERVIEW:

A working group was formed in August/September 2017 with the aim of reviewing the High Hedge guidance originally developed in 2014 following experience in dealing with a number of enquiries and the outcome of an appeal [APP/2016/3236](#) to the Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). The appeal decision prompted a review of the internal process in light of the potential implications for the Council in terms of the handling of High Hedge applications in the future.

It was agreed that the working group would review the current High Hedges process, specifically the assessment element and potential enforcement implications, in liaison with relevant Consultees to look at any lessons that

HIGH HEDGES - OUTCOME OF PROCESS



required to be learned and make any revisions to the process adopted by the Council including providing any additional training for staff dealing with High Hedges applications where necessary.

The High Hedge Working Group has already undertaken benchmarking with Local Authorities within Scotland, improved the pre-application process, clarified the application validation process, and formalised the site visit protocol for Planners. Ongoing work includes a scheduled training event for representatives from each Development Management Team in measuring 'high hedges', website updates through the concurrent Website Working Group and detailed Planner guidance for assessing high hedge applications.

Following completion of this area of work, it is intended that the updated guidance will be publicly available and will offer greater clarity to enquirers. Specifically, the considerations of the Local Authority and requirements of the Act will be set out and early dialogue encouraged. Changes to the process will also allow Planners to undertake site visits, if relevant, at the pre-application stage to ensure greater certainty to applicants when submitting an enquiry or application. This would in turn ensure that the High Hedges Act is being used

as intended, to balance the needs of the hedge owner and applicant where a dispute cannot otherwise be resolved.

The High Hedges Group will continue to convene on a regular basis to incorporate any specific issues from ongoing pre-application enquiries, applications and appeals and communicate any outcomes to the relevant staff.

Information on all aspects of the High Hedges process is available on the Council's website under [High Hedges](#).

GOALS:

Agree and identify the remit of the working group, with participant members of the Planning Service, including the Planning Enforcement Team, with members adopting the role of the High Hedges contact in Development Management Area Teams;

Review of the High Hedges process (including mapping), best practice and the guidance notes are available to view on the website and internal guidance;

Agree and identify the role and input from consultees and specifically the Environment Team given their wider knowledge and expertise on natural environment matters;

Identify any training needs for Development Management to assist with the assessment of High Hedges and better understanding of the process;

Agree and finalise the enforcement process with the Enforcement Team; and

Review of the fee and undertaking of costing exercise.

OUTCOMES:

The Council have established a DM/ Enforcement protocol covering engagement with applicants post decision to secure compliance with notices and Direct-Action protocol in the

event that a satisfactory resolution can be reached. In the case of the High Hedges appeal decision (APP/2016/323) attempts by the Council to engage with the hedge owner to secure a resolution have failed and the Council are in the process of implementing Direct Action and seeking full cost recovery. This action is scheduled to take place in April 2018 to reduce the height of the hedge in line with the Notice and the outcomes will be reported in the next PPF.

The High Hedges process shall be subject to ongoing review as part of the Council's commitment to the Planning Performance Framework and to drive a culture of continuous improvement.

In moving forward, the High Hedges Working Group will continue to monitor, review and update the process and they will be the main point of contact should there be any queries or advice sought in relation to High Hedge matters to ensure consistency in approaches to the handling of High Hedge enquiries and formal applications by the Council.

Staff guidance notes have been finalised and will be rolled out accompanied by training which has still be completed, this is earmarked to be undertaken in the next PPF reporting period.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Paul Williamson, Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 57: PLANNING/ROADS – USING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

December 2017 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

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Place making
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training
- Online Systems
- Transport
- Active Travel

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

As part of the Council's Planning and Roads Team liaison meetings and specifically as a follow on from work undertaken during the previous PPF reporting period on early engagement with agents, developers and consulting engineers, work continues on enhancement and improvement of pre-application discussions. This focus on the promotion of meaningful early engagement is consistent with the wider Service Improvement commitment that is being promoted via the review of the pre-application and major application process as outlined within [Case Study 17](#).

In tandem with this ongoing improvement project, representatives from the Development Management Section, Roads Development/Transportation and ICT are in the process of reviewing how better use can be made of the Uniform System to share information on pre-application discussions.

Initial meetings and a demonstration of the Uniform System have taken place with Roads/Transportation and Development Management Section representatives to view the system set up and to discuss a protocol for the recording and sharing of information within the system.

A formal roll out of the system and associated staff training will be facilitated once the process had been finalised and agreed.

GOALS:

Agree and identify a process for the recording of pre-application enquiries in the Uniform System to improve upon the sharing of information on pre-app enquiries to improve communication between Services on specific road and planning related matters.

OUTCOMES:

This work is ongoing at the time of reporting, however initial discussions have been positive and the benefits that the Uniform system should be able to provide in terms of information sharing between Council Services has been acknowledged.

The finalisation of the protocol, roll out and training will be completed during this next PPF reporting period and the Development Management Section will monitor and review the system once in place with a view to roll out to other key consultees if this approach to information sharing and recording is proven to be successful in improving collaborative working and delivering improvements in service delivery to customers.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Chris Ormiston, Team Manager (Development Management)

CASE STUDY 58: REPURPOSING OF FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SERVICES GROUP (FIRS)

LOCATION AND DATES:

Throughout 2016/17

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

RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

3 - Driving Improved Performance - early collaboration with applicants

6 - Continuous Improvement - progress ambitious and relevant service improvements

10 - Promoting the Plan-Led System - Cross-sector stakeholders

12 - Simplifying and Streamlining - corporate working across services

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

The Future Infrastructure for Services (FIRS) Group was initially set up in 1999 by the Principal Developer Obligations Officer to identify the areas of Local Authority infrastructure that would be impacted by development. This allowed the Principal Developer Obligations Officer to negotiate with developers in pursuit of contributions towards the provision of infrastructure identified by the FIRS Group. Through changes in planning legislation leading to the transition from planning gain to developer obligations the purpose of the FIRS Group had lost momentum in recent years.

However, the purpose of the FIRS group has been re-focused to co-ordinate the collection of data from Council Services and external partners (Scottish Water and Transport Scotland etc.) to be input to the Future Infrastructure Database and to create a collaborative environment for the resolution of wicked issues that require cross-Service collaboration.

In this environment the agenda is not restricted to planning but open to all the specialisms within each member service and partner organisation. In this arena we can identify the impact of planning on service delivery but also cultivate the creation of a culture of participation where Services and Partner Organisations are invited to collaborate in the planning process in Aberdeenshire.

GOALS:

To create a collaborative environment where infrastructure capacity, need and investment can be identified to support the delivery of development.

To create a collaborative environment of collective responsibility where wicked issues that constrain the delivery of development can be resolved.

OUTCOMES:

We believe that this form of collaborative planning promotes cross Service working preventing duplication of work within the Local Authority and forging new methods of infrastructure delivery through private/public sector partnership working.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Paul Macari, Principal Developer Obligations Officer

CASE STUDY 59: DEVELOPER OBLIGATIONS TEAM PERFORMANCE

LOCATION AND DATES:

Throughout 2016/17

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

RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

1 - Decision Making

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

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Process Improvement
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

Throughout the last 12 months the Developer Obligations team has undergone significant change in both procedure and personnel. A reduction in staffing levels combined with increased involvement in the planning process (increased consultation requests and the revision of the [Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance](#) document) highlighted a demonstrable need to modernise the Team's working practices and create resilience to maintain the level of service provided to the Council's Planning Service as well as our communities.

The improvements in procedure and methodology for calculating contributions are reflected in the content of the recently adopted Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance document and the collaboration with partner Services and Organisations to create the Future Infrastructure Database.

QUARTER	NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS	% PROCESSED IN 14 DAYS
2015/16 Q3	266	77.7%
2015/16 Q4	253	73.8%
2016/17 Q1	260	77.3%
2016/17 Q2	251	86.1%
2016/17 Q3	235	96.9%
2016/17 Q4	237	97.3%
2017/18 Q1	267	97.6%
2017/18 Q2	292	97.3%
2017/18 Q3	239	96.8%
2017/18 Q4	198	98.7%

These improvements coupled with a complete business process review have resulted in significant time savings when assessing the Developer Obligations requirements of planning applications and pre-application enquiries. When compared to the number of planning applications assessed by the Developer Obligations Team as demonstrated by Table 1 below these time savings are evidenced by the increased percentage of consultation responses issued for planning applications within 14 days of receipt.

The creation of an enhanced and detailed Developer Obligations Manual has ensured that the work of the team can be maintained should staffing levels drop (due to annual leave or sickness). Consequently, this has meant that the level of service the Team provides can be sustained creating resilience as demonstrated by the figures in Table 1.

GOALS:

To create an environment of continuous improvement.

To create an environment of resilience.
To enhance efficiency in the developer obligations consultation process.
To aid the improvement of planning performance.

OUTCOMES:

The performance of the Developer Obligations Team is greatly enhanced in terms of the quality of our evidence base and the certainty this provides when demonstrating relationships between development proposals and works to mitigate their impact on infrastructure capacity. This has led to the team becoming more effective. An available and up to date evidence base prevents the delays from arising from Service/stakeholder consultations and evidence gathering. This has meant that the time taken to respond to consultation requests from the Planning Service has reduced. The Developer Obligations Manual provides certainty and clarity in all areas of the developer obligations process. This has allowed Officers to learn new skills and take on new duties so that the performance of the Team does not falter during periods of annual leave or sickness. This is reflected in the performance statistics in Table 1.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Paul Macari, Principal Developer Obligations Officer

CASE STUDY 60: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TRAINING – AN EXAMPLE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

6 December 2017

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

- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

6 – Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement 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:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

As part of a Development Management staff training day held on 6 December 2017 (see Case Study 54), the Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) gave a [presentation](#) on the updated Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA Regs), which had been transposed and adopted into legislation in May 2017.

GOALS:

EIA TRAINING

The overall aim here was to develop staff skills and knowledge on Environmental Impact Assessment for staff in Development Management to ensure that they understood the new Regulations, but also to assist staff whereby they would be able to explain the changes and assist developers/customers.

Officers had attended Scottish Government workshops during the transposition from the over-arching EU Directive into Scottish Regulation and the nature of the SDDT's work meant that several projects had been dealt with and considered under the new Regulations, placing Officers in a good position to offer advice to colleagues.



The presentation divided the Regulations into 7 sections which in turn outlined the main differences between the superseded 2011 EIA Regs and the new 2017 EIA Regs. This approach was designed to offer added clarity and emphasis for staff to provide a wider basis for the understanding of the new regulations.

Officers were provided with 'good' examples of Screening Requests received under the new Regulations, highlighting the requirements for more detail and setting out what was required compared to the previous regulations – this was designed to provide real life examples and ensure best practice amongst all staff. Potential impacts and added complications envisaged were also highlighted to ensure that all staff were aware of wider implications.

OUTCOMES:

Through this and similar style training the aim has been to ensure that Officers are continually updating their knowledge and understanding of legislation which should ensure the continued operation and implementation of best practice whilst also allowing officers to offer the highest level of service to customers in these fields.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Murison, Senior Planner
James Hewitt, Planner

CASE STUDY 61: LOCAL REVIEW TRAINING

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House 19 April 2017, 23 June 2017, 30 June 2017

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

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

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 – Driving Improved Performance
- 12 – Simplifying and Streamlining

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

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

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

Training sessions delivered on the Local Reviews including: session for Planning & Building Standards staff at Development Management Training Day; training day for Local Review Body Members, supporting and Development Management staff; session for Local Review Body members and supporting staff on development plan policy and associated guidance.

[Local Review Body training papers](#) and [Powerpoint](#).

GOALS:

To provide all Councillors and staff engaged in the Local Review process with sufficient knowledge and understanding of the legislative background, the regulations and procedures, the information requirements and relevant planning considerations in dealing with review cases to ensure an efficient and quality service and consistent robust decision making. To provide feedback to Members and staff on experience to date, common issues and areas for improvement.

OUTCOMES:

Local Review Body members who are clear about the legal requirements and the process and their roles and responsibilities in the process; which are quite different to their role on other Committees of the Council.

Supporting professional and administrative staff who are clear about the requirements of the process and can provide support and advice to members and stakeholders to ensure all the necessary information is provided timeously, the process operates efficiently, and good quality decisions are made. Development Management and other Planning & Buildings staff have a better understanding of the Review process and how the specialist advice they provide, information recorded in Reports of Handling and framing of Decision Notices informs the Review process and is important in ensuring efficient and robust decision making.

The Service will continue to monitor the performance of the [Local Review Body](#) and the need for further training for Members and staff.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Mark Myles, Planning Adviser, Local Review Body

PART 2: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

All supporting evidence for this Planning Performance Framework has been integrated within the body of the text by use of hyperlinks to relevant documents, website and information.

A variety of resources have been used including:

- Customer input from annual Customer Surveys, Testimonials associated with the application process, comments via forums for customers, developers/housebuilders and from specific training events for Community Councils.
- Various service improvement, process and procedure reviews which have been on-going/ newly instigated have been referred to/evidenced including reviews of Masterplanning, Design Review Panel, Alignment of plans to ensure infrastructure availability (corporate review).
- Various elements of partnership work and collaboration with both internal

and external bodies and services are evidenced throughout the PPF with respect to regeneration, improving environments, and quality design, seeking solutions, innovative thinking and actions, ensuring best practice and continuous improvements.

- Benchmarking through informal arrangements, HOPS and Planning Performance forums and joint training.
 - The suite of relevant Council and Service specific documents – Council Plan, Infrastructure Services Plan, Customer Survey Action Plans, Corporate initiatives (One Council), Local Development Plan, Regeneration strategies, Economic Strategies and a range of Committee reports.
-



GOURDON - KINCARDINE & MEARNS

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	5,6,7	Interdisciplinary Working	9,32,39,40
Conservation	1,2,3	Collaborative Working	24,25,29,23,34a,34b,40,55
Regeneration	1,2,3	Community Engagement	10,11,12,13,30,36
Environment	23	Placemaking	34b,58
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	11
Masterplanning	4	Performance Monitoring	15,48,49,52,58
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	10,11,12,13,38	Process Improvement	16,17,42,44,46,51,52,54,55
Housing Supply	21,22	Project Management	19,29
Affordable Housing	21,22,45	Skills Sharing	43,60
Economic Development	58	Staff Training	48,54,60
Enforcement	8,50	Online Systems	36,46,56
Development Management Processes	16,49,52	Transport	31,34b,39,57
Planning Applications	18,19,26,27,34b	Active Travel	
Other: please note - Pre-Application: 31,34b,56			

PART 3: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2018-19

PART 3A

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In the coming year we will:

- Undertake workshops and seminars with Elected Members and Community Councils (Area/Ward level to evaluate the Local Development Plan Bids received.)
- Complete meetings as required with key stakeholders.
- 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.
- Complete the Flood Risk Assessment as background information for the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan.
- Complete the Habitats Regulations Assessment to inform the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan.
- Review vision, policy content and proposed local development sites for inclusion in the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan.
- Present the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to Area Committees for consideration.
- Present the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to Infrastructure Services Committee for authority to publish.
- Publish the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan for public consultation with associated publicity.
- Log public responses to the Main Issues Report.

ENVIRONMENT PLANNING

In the coming year we will:

- Historic Assets Management Project: continue agreed programme of maintenance and repair of Council owned structures
- Conservation Areas - Complete at least 2 further Conservation Area Review/Appraisals
- Fraserburgh CARS/THI - Continue implementation of the agreed Project Plan
- Banff CARS - Complete the CARS project
- Review of Tree Preservation Orders:
 1. Undertake Phase 4; involving surveying and assessing existing TPOs and proposing revocations and re-serving of TPOs as appropriate,
 2. Identify and select TPOs for inclusion in Phase 5.
- Access: deliver access/non-motorised bridge improvements across Aberdeenshire in accordance with agreed programme.
- Access: work with community groups to take forward volunteering initiatives.
- Run a number of workshops to support community led path Developments
- Improve average response times from Archaeology to planning consultations by 10%
- Development of a Management Plan template for Council owned Scheduled Assets.
- Increase number of opportunities for communities to become involved in Archaeology through implementing ongoing projects and seeking opportunities to develop new ones.
- Further develop partnership working between the Ranger Service and other local community groups to reach vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- Develop volunteer policy and procedures to increase volunteering opportunities within the Ranger Service
- Complete review of key strategies for Historic and Natural

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"> Continued Commitment - Roll out and implement Design Panel Continued Commitment- Masterplan process/conclusion/implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-application and Major Application Review - completion/roll out and implementation Continue annual Customer Surveys Achieve Service Excellence status for Development Management. Implement Site Visit technology Continue Community Council Focus
GOVERNANCE	CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 Legal/Planning improvement project New Commitment - Produce High Hedges process map for direct action

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 75% within 2 months Non-Householder Applications - Determine 60% within 2 months Householder Applications - Determine 90% within 2 months Processing Agreements - 100% major applications subject to a Processing Agreement **Legal Agreements - Achieve an average of 32 weeks Legacy Applications: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce pre 2009 to 0 Reduce Overall (post 2009) by 50%

*Subject to Target

**Based on Benchmarking Performance

*** Targets adjusted to consider Elected Member request to increase all targets by 5%

**** Measurable Targets and Outputs

PART 3B: DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN 2017-18:

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2016-2017

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake comprehensive training on the new Local Development Plan with Elected Members to emphasise the key changes that have occurred since 2012. 	<p>Training took place with Elected Members at six Area Committees between 30 May 2017 and 22 August 2017 to advise of the changes in the new LDP, and to further advise new Members on the form and function of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. This training was described as “the most useful post-election training given to Members” by several Councillors.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with an Elected Member Steering Group to inform the approach to be taken for policy in the next Local Development Plan. 	<p>A role has been identified for a group of Councillors, many of whom are on the Infrastructure Services Committee, who form the “Planning and Building Standards Member Officer Working Group”. This Working Group discusses various Planning and Building Standards matters including, specifically at each meeting, the LDP. The Group acts as a sounding board for Local Development Plan policies and processes. The Group meets approximately every 2 months.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with development stakeholders and infrastructure providers on a means of assessment of information required to accompany bids for development to the Plan. 	<p>A Bid Assessment Form has been developed and subject to detailed scrutiny by key stakeholders and development management colleagues to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a robust monitoring scheme for the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 to ensure that any unforeseen consequences of the Plan are identified and picked up in sufficient time to inform the next Plan 	<p>A Policy Monitoring Scheme was developed and implemented to ensure that the best possible information was collected on the use of policies in making Development Plan related decisions. Staff changes resulted in a second version being produced in August 2017. The monitoring scheme involved the assessment of planning decisions against parts of the policies in the Plan, with information that could not be gathered by any automatic means through the Development Management ICT systems. Staff changes, and absences has affected this piece of work which has delayed its completion and is now timetabled to be completed in Autumn 2018. Lessons have been learned from this process in terms of the need to have detailed and transparent referencing of the policies within the Plan, even though this will still not address issues associated with the interpretation of the policies in decision making.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a revised version and resolve comments on Supplementary Guidance No. 7 Developer Obligations following comments made by the Reporters in the Report of the Examination. 	<p>Supplementary Guidance No. 7 “Developer Obligations: Methods of calculation” was modified following a full public consultation exercise and was submitted, with a supporting statement to the Scottish Government. Scottish Government have agreed the Supplementary Guidance and it has now been published.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish Planning Advice on the detail of Policy C1 Using Resources in buildings. This would consider specifically the standards that would apply and where exceptions might be made including to take account of financial viability. The guidance will also set out the circumstances and timescales in applying an increase in the target for low or zero carbon generating technologies and the parameters for assessing the feasibility of district heating schemes in major developments. 	<p>The merits of producing this planning advice have been questioned, despite it having been added to the Local Development Plan by Scottish Ministers. The standards that apply “wherever feasible” are already contained within section 7 of the building standards technical notes and BREEAM. As the policy stipulates the minimum level that must apply, the benefits of producing this guidance was seen as limiting. Planning staff are arguably unqualified to argue issues of financial viability with developers on the level of sustainability that a development provides. Significant discussion has taken place at a national level about the merits of removing control of carbon neutrality from the planning system and enshrining it solely in a minimum building regulation standard. Planning advice would not achieve any additional objectives.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a revised web-based vehicle for the promotion of the content of the Plan, using the Story Map product to deliver quality Development Plan information. 	<p>A “storymap” depiction of the Local Development Plan has been developed and implemented (see the “Interactive Online Local Development Plan”). This is superior to traditional paper based plans as elements such as natural heritage designations and infrastructure constraints can be “zoomed” into to show the impacts on individual streets or properties.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake Town Centre Health-checks on 11 major town centres in the area, including an element of community engagement. 	<p>A programme of Town Centre Health Checks was completed in June 2017. The results from this exercise have been prepared. As part of the health checks, a series of questions were put to the “Citizens Panel” used by Aberdeenshire Council as a plebiscite on policy issues. These questions related to issues associated with strategic retail planning to inform our understanding of the use of existing centres and formed part of the Town Centre Health Check report. Town Centre Health Checks are completed every second year.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a root and branch assessment of the need and demand for housing land in Aberdeenshire to resolve issues associated with development land allocations following past practice (i.e. what has been in past plans) rather than meeting both developers and community aspirations. 	<p>Analysis has been undertaken of the most recent Housing Land Audit to identify those sites where there is a realistic prospect of delivery, either in the next five years or longer, as required. This is leading to a substantial number of legacy allocations being proposed to be removed from the next Plan, on the basis that their inclusion only confuses communities and leads to the expectation of development when this is a remote possibility.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake place-based assessments of 60-70 of our settlements, working with communities to identify land use planning actions that should be taken forward in the forthcoming plan to meet community objectives. Part of this process will be the development of Place Standard assessments the outcomes of which will be shared with other relevant Services. 	<p>From October to December 2018, Local Development Plan events were held with Community Planning colleagues at 64 of 67 Community Councils across Aberdeenshire. In addition, a further 8 Community Council forum meetings were attended. Three Community Councils were unable to meet with us. In each case a meeting note was prepared and circulated back to the Community Council, and Elected Members were provided with an opportunity (through Area Committee Seminars) to discuss the results before aspirations were transposed into the current working draft of the LDP. Place standard assessments were used wherever possible to direct and focus discussion on the matters that were of particular interest to Communities. These were shared with Community Planning colleagues and the findings passed for noting to other sections of the Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a programme of work to inform and build upon the Heat network map in Aberdeenshire to increase knowledge of planning to maximise the use of currently redundant heat sources. 	<p>Ongoing assessment of major heat generating sources has been undertaken. This has been disappointing in so far as no major new heat sources have been identified in the past year. Current allocations in the Local Development Plan are required to consider the feasibility of a metered heat network within their site, but no developments have been identified where this has taken place.</p>

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2016-2017

ENVIRONMENT PLANNING

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?	
Historic Assets Management Project: continue agreed programme of maintenance and repair of Council owned structures	Yes	Programme of work completed
* Complete at least 3 further Conservation Area Reviews: Roanheads, Crovie and Gardenstown	No	Crovie Conservation Area Review and Management Plan completed and approved. Management Plans also completed and for Auchenblae, Kirkton of Fetteresso and Benholm.
* Fraserburgh CARS/THI:		
1. Delivery of Saltoun Square project	Yes	Work commenced in May 2017 and completion is expected Autumn 2018.
2. Acquisition of former John Trail building and project development	No	The Council now owns the upper floors of the building and a legal process is taking place to acquire the ground floor.
3. Initiation of one further other priority project	Yes	Three other priority projects have been initiated.
4. Delivery of 5 Small Grants projects	Yes	The Grant scheme was oversubscribed. The first five projects are at the design and tender stage.
5. Appointment of young people as apprentices and establishment of training program for contractors, conservation professionals and property owners.	No	Apprentice not appointed but NESCOL was commissioned to deliver a series of training courses to young people, local contractors, apprentices and property owners and these are on-going.
* Review of Tree Preservation Orders:		
1. Undertake Phase 3; involving surveying and assessing 30 existing TPOs and proposing revocations and re-servicing of TPOs as appropriate,	Yes	Phase 3 completed – 58 new and updated TPOs confirmed and 15 revocations confirmed.
2. Identify and select TPOs for inclusion in Phase 4.	Yes	TPOs identified for inclusion in Phase 4.
* Adopt completed Forest and Woodland strategy as supplementary guidance to Local Development Plan	Yes	Completed.
* Access: deliver access improvements across Aberdeenshire in accordance with agreed programme. Including missing link in Deeside Way.	Yes	Completed path improvement works at Banchory, Kemnay, Port Elphinstone and Dunnottar and other programmed path/bridge works.
* Access: work with community groups to take forward volunteering initiatives.	Ye	Worked with community to establish Torphins Paths Group and feasibility of creating new paths and maintaining existing.
Run a number of workshops to support community led path developments	Yes	Workshops run with Marr Area Partnership and Cairngorms National Park.
* Complete review of key strategies for Historic and Natural Environments.	No	Completed review of Archaeology and Ranger Service Strategies. Draft strategies for Access, Historic and Natural Environment reported to Member Officer Working Group.

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2016-2017

GREEN - COMPLETE AMBER - PARTIAL COMPLETION RED - NOT COMPLETE BLUE - CONTINUED

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

OPEN FOR BUSINESS	COMPLETE	HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT ON THE GROUND	COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Commitment - Section 75 Legal/ Planning improvement project Continued Commitment - Masterplan process Review (on-going) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial Completion - more work to do Continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Commitment - Design Panel Process Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial Completion - more work to do Continue
CERTAINTY	COMPLETE	COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE	COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New/Continued Commitment-Pre-application & Major Application process review Continued Commitment - Enforcement Policy Continued Commitment - Prepare a Member and Area Committee Protocol for Enforcement Prepare an Enforcement Priority System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the review on hold until the outcome on charging for pre-application services became clear. Once the Bill becomes law and the passing of the necessary secondary legislation, the review will recommence thereafter and will reflect the updated planning landscape in respect of a charging structure. Refer to : Enforcement Service Improvements - committed and new below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out further Customer Surveys once yearly New Commitment - Re-focus on Community Council Engagement New Commitment - Achieve Service Excellence status for Development Management New Commitment - Implement Site Visit technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YES (Annual) YES Not complete - Continue Ongoing - technical issues to resolve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Commitment - Develop the Planning Enforcement content on Council's website New Commitment - Develop Relations with Procurator Fiscal Office - Collaboration and Liaison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to : Enforcement Service Improvements - committed and new below 		

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING	COMPLETE	EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Commitment – STC review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial Completion – more work to do Continue 		
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE	COMPLETE	CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	COMPLETE

ENFORCEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS – COMMITTED AND NEW

TASK	UPDATE
Continued Commitment - Develop the Planning Enforcement Content on Councils Website	In late 2017/early 2018, significant progress has been made regarding enhancing the planning enforcement content on the Council's website. The draft has been subject of much in-house discussion and is now at a finalised stage. The content is scheduled to go live in late May 2018. Work is underway to produce an online interactive complaint form, which will complement the enforcement content. There are technical, administrative and financial complexities with the interactive form, which will lead to a time delay in its implementation. Given that there is an imminent need to provide a more user-friendly means of reporting breaches of planning control, an interim measure comprising of an electronic complaint form will be used until the interactive form is available. While the work is due for completion in the next reporting period, the need to revisit and review information made available on planning enforcement will be a continuous improvement.
Continued Commitment - Prepare a Member and Area Committee Protocol for Enforcement	The sharing of information between the Enforcement Team and Elected Members has improved. This has resulted in a reduction in requests from local Members for updates on cases. When enforcement action has been taken local Members are notified and provided a copy of the Notice for their information. This information sharing has expanded during the 2017/2018 period with Members now being updated at key stages of a case, such as being informed of formal Notices being withdrawn (following compliance) and of agreed outcomes following Non-Compliance Meetings. This has ensured that local Members are aware of the key stages and relevant information and can respond to questions raised by constituents directly or at the local Community Council meetings. Local Members are kept informed on any potential Direct Action being considered by the Service.
Continued Commitment - Enforcement Policy	<p>Work on the Enforcement Policy is ongoing and will be continued in the next PPF period when it is anticipated that the work will be complete. The Policy will set out the policy framework for decision making, setting out the approach to enforcement and how resources will be targeted to respond to complaints and when action will be pursued. It will be used to better inform the public and in conjunction with the Charter will provide an improved public understanding of the Enforcement process, how decisions are reached, and the priorities of the Council. This is being developed in-line with the information that will be available online in the dedicated Enforcement Section of the Council Website that is due to go live in the next reporting period. It is intended to hold a seminar in May 2018 with all members to discuss Enforcement which will include discussions on an Enforcement Policy including priorities.</p> <p>The Enforcement Team will be updating the Charter in late 2018/early 2019 to reflect current commitments and expectations of the Service provided.</p>

<p>Continued Commitment Develop Relations with the Procurator Fiscal Office – Collaboration and Liaison</p>	<p>In mid-January 2018, all team members (including Senior Planner and Team Manager) attended a Training Course on Specialist Investigative Training. The course covered the procedures and requirements for progressing cases to Court. The content included initial investigation techniques, recording of information, conducting interviews, report preparation and what is involved/ what to expect when giving evidence in Court. This has highlighted various matters that require to be addressed to improve the working practices of the Team and to prepare for reporting matters to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). The Enforcement Team will develop guidance to enable any potential cases to be referred to the COPFS using the online system. Officers are currently investigating the process by which to become an established user of the COPFS reporting system. This has included consulting with other Services within the Council (Trading Standards and Animal Health). 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. Further work will be undertaken in strengthening relations with the Procurator Fiscal Service, following the initial meeting in 2016 when a dedicated point of contact was agreed.</p>
<p>Enhance the tools for gathering evidence during site visits</p>	<p>To ensure that staff members are prepared for site visits investigating alleged breaches of planning control, all Officers have now been issued with a formal reporting notebook along with a caution statement to use where appropriate. Work is underway to create a “Kit Bag” containing relevant equipment along with copies of formal certification to assist with gathering and recording of evidence whilst on site. Electronic copies of all formal certification shall be stored centrally, and the relevant certificates/ forms shall require to be complete on return from site visits and stored securely. Work is proceeding to source various pieces of equipment and accommodation required to undertake interviews in accordance with the Draft Code of Practice. For security reasons, the use of body cameras for all Planning Enforcement Officers is presently being investigated.</p>
<p>New Commitment - Review of Procedure Notes and Decision Report</p>	<p>All enforcement procedure notes created in 2016/2017 are now in the process of being reviewed, along with process maps that were created at the time of the Enforcement Audit to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose.</p> <p>The Enforcement Decision Report was updated in March 2018 in anticipation of the changes required by amendments to the Data Protection Act. The Report has been amended to clearly identify where agreement with Management is required at key stages (i.e. proposed action, serving of notice, case closure) and to provide a rolling log of all pertinent actions and decisions taken. Should a case be subject to an FOI request or a customer complaint, there is one succinct document detailing the handling of the case.</p>
<p>New Commitment - Develop use of Uniform System for Enforcement Team</p>	<p>The Uniform System is presently not used to its full potential and to address this, bench marking has been undertaken with another Local Authority (Highland Council) who advise that their Enforcement Officers use Uniform daily. A meeting is proposed to be arranged for senior Officers and IT colleagues to visit the Local Authority for information sharing and to benchmark procedures to establish better working practices and procedures for the Team as well as their use of the Uniform System.</p>
<p>New Commitment - Enhance engagement and liaison between Enforcement/ Development Management</p>	<p>A project group was set up in late 2017 and the first meeting has taken place. This will be tasked to develop and improve engagement between the two parts of the Service. A closer working relationship will provide improvements for customers and staff and enable consistency of approach to breaches as well as manage the expectations of all parties. Improved information sharing, and better screening will ensure that Officer time can be spent resolving significant breaches of planning control. A process map will be developed by the working group which will include key roles, consultations arrangement, and timescales for response.</p>

PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *	ACHIEVED	PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *	ACHIEVED
Average Timescales:		% Within 2 Months:	
Major Applications - Achieve an average of 35 weeks	29.5	All Planning Applications - Determine 70% within 2 months	87%/8.2
Local Applications - Achieve an average of 11 weeks	8.2	Non-Householder Applications - Determine 65% within 2 months	82%/7.4
Non-Householder Applications	9.1	Householder Applications - Determine 95% within 2 months	95.3%/6.8
Household Applications - Achieve an average of 6 weeks	6.8	Processing Agreements - 100% major applications subject to a Processing Agreement	80%
Other Applications - Achieve an average of 8 weeks	7.5	**Legal Agreements - Achieve an average of 32 weeks	Major - 35.7 Local - 14.4
Measurement of outputs and measurable targets for Customer Surveys to be applied***	Yes	Legacy Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce pre-2009 to 0 • Reduce Overall (post 2009) by 50% 	Cleared - 64 Remaining - 49
E Planning Online Submission - 65% of customers submitting on line applications.	90%		

*Subject to Target

**Based on Benchmarking Performance

*** Measurable Targets and Outputs

PART 4: NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS (NHIS)



4A: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2017-18	2016-17
LOCAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING:		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period Requirement: less than 5 years	11 months	4 years and 10 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 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	No The Development Plan scheme in force was January 2017. The timetable for adoption of the LDP 2017 well set by then. Uncertainty associated with the roll out of the planning bill restricted the content of the DPS to only the adoption of the LDP 2017.
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	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.	Yes A formal notice of adoption was published. Copies were made available in public places. Representees to the plan and supplementary guidance were advised of the form and location of the LDP2017. Supplementary guidance was published. Publication of Supplementary guidance was advertised. Representees and other stakeholders on the supplementary guidance were advised on the adoption of its publication.

KEY OUTCOMES	2016-17		2017-18		
EFFECTIVE LAND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS	AHMA	RHMA	AHMA	RHMA	NOTES
Established Housing Land Supply	33,821 units	13,084 units	33,004 units	13,135 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Housing Land Supply (units)	11,250 units	3,510 units	10,753 units	3,605 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply Total Capacity	29,892 units	7,185 units	29,069 units	7,072 units	Note 1
5 Year Housing Supply Target	7,668 units	3,271 units	7,509 units	3,206 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply	7.3 years	5.4 years	7.2 years	5.6 years	Note 1
Housing Approvals	2,281 units		2,943 units		Note 2
Housing Completions over last 5 years (Aberdeenshire)	5831 units		5,903 units		Note 3
Marketable Employment Land Supply	341 ha		298 ha		Note 4
Employment take-up during reporting year	9 ha		14.2 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 7.2 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 and sites are continuing to progress. However, development rates on some sites remain slow, reflecting the current market situation which continues to be negatively influenced by difficulties in the oil and gas sector.

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 years supply. There are many more sites in the post five-year effective supply

(3,467 units) which could come forward earlier if required. In addition, there are almost 2,750 units constrained only by marketability and which could become effective if demand picks up.

Source: Housing Land Audit 2017. Figures correct as at 1 January 2017.

NOTE 2

The number of housing approvals in Aberdeenshire has increased since 2016/17 and stands at 2,943 for 2017/18, largely due to the inclusion of several planning approvals for a high number of units on large sites allocated in the Local Development Plan.

Source: Uniform Housing Approvals April 2017 - March 2018

NOTE 3

There were 1,152 completions in Aberdeenshire in 2016. Over the last 5 years 3376 units were built in the Aberdeenshire part of the Aberdeen HMA and 2,527 in the Rural HMA. (Figures include CNP)

Source: Housing Land Audit 2017. Figures correct as at 1 January 2017.

NOTE 4

The marketable employment land supply in Aberdeenshire decreased by 13% from 2016/17 but remains well in excess of Strategic Development Plan targets. Of this marketable land, 65 ha is classed as being immediately available, a small decrease of 5 ha since last year.

Take-up of employment land over the period was 14.2 ha, an increase from the previous year and in line with the 10-year average. A further 8.5 ha was under construction at 1 April 2017.

Source: employment Land Audit 2016/17. Figures correct as at 1 April 2017.

4B: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	2017-2018	2016-2017
PROJECT PLANNING		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	391 - 15%	394 - 15%
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	12 - 80%	16 - 73%
DECISION MAKING		
Application approval rate	93%	94%
Delegation rate	92%	92%
Validation	24%	26%
DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES		
Major Developments	29.5 weeks	77.8 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	9.1 weeks	9.9 weeks
Householder developments	6.8 weeks	6.7 weeks
LEGACY CASES		
Number cleared during reporting period	64	61
Number remaining	49	43

4C: ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

	2017-2018	2016-2017
Time since enforcement charter published/ reviewed - requirement: review every 2 years	Mar 2017	Feb 2015
Complaints lodged	457	546
Cases taken up	398	486
Breaches identified	#	#
Cases resolved	327	436
Notices served	33	51
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

4D: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Short contextual statement

In terms of planning enforcement, the volume of complaints taken up has dropped in the period from 486 to 398 and reflects in part the drop in planning activity and in part, to continuing efforts to screen complaints when received to ensure that only suspected enforcement breaches are being dealt with. The majority of breaches continue to be resolved through compliance rather than formal enforcement action. No

prosecutions have been pursued due to the barriers that currently exist in pursuing such action and the fact that such action does not resolve the breach.

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

PART 5A: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A: DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES

TIMESCALES	2017-18	2017-18	2016-17
OVERALL			
Major developments	3	29.5 weeks	77.8 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	1064	9.1 weeks	9.9 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	81.6%	7.4 weeks	7.2 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	18.4%	16.8 weeks	25.3 weeks
Householder developments	746	6.8 weeks	6.7 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	95.3%	6.5 weeks	6.4 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	4.7%	11.9 weeks	14.1 weeks
Housing Developments			
Major	2	35.7 weeks	40.9 weeks
Local housing developments	510	10 weeks	12.2 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	74.7%	7.6 weeks	7.5 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	25.3%	17.2 weeks	29.2 weeks
Business and Industry			
Major	0	-	102.3 weeks
Local business and industry developments	98	9.7 weeks	8.8 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	78.6%	7.5 weeks	6.8 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	21.4%	17.5 weeks	21.8 weeks
EIA Developments	0	-	6.6 weeks
Other Consents	222	7.5 weeks	7.8 weeks
• Listed Building/Conservation Area Consents	110	7.9 weeks	8.9 weeks
• Advertisements	72	6.5 weeks	6.0 weeks
• Hazardous Substances Consents	1	19.3 weeks	18.1 weeks
• Other Consents and Certificates	39	8.0 weeks	6.8 weeks
Planning/legal agreements	2	35.7 weeks	125.0 weeks
• Major: average time	84	14.4 weeks	15.0 weeks
• Local: average time			

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

TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS	ORIGINAL DECISIONS UPHELD			
		2017-2018		2016-2017	
		NO. %	2016-2017	No.	%
Local reviews	39	28	72%	30	71%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	21	12	57%	12	52%

PART 5C: CONTEXT

Performance, the reasons, factors and influences for increase/decrease is embodied and is identified throughout the PPF 2017-18.

PART 6: WORKFORCE INFORMATION

The information requested in this section is an integral part of providing the context for the information in parts 1-5. Staffing information should be a snapshot of the position on 31 March.

	TIER 1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE	TIER 2 DIRECTOR	TIER 3 HEAD OF SERVICE	TIER 4 MANAGER
Head of Planning Service	1	1	1	2.8 + 7

RTPI QUALIFIED STAFF	HEADCOUNT	FTE
Development Management	45	43.7
Development Planning	11	10.8
Enforcement	7	6.4
Specialists	34	24.9
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	75	58.4

STAFF AGE PROFILE	HEADCOUNT
Under 30	27
30-39	38
40-49	44
50 and over	63

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

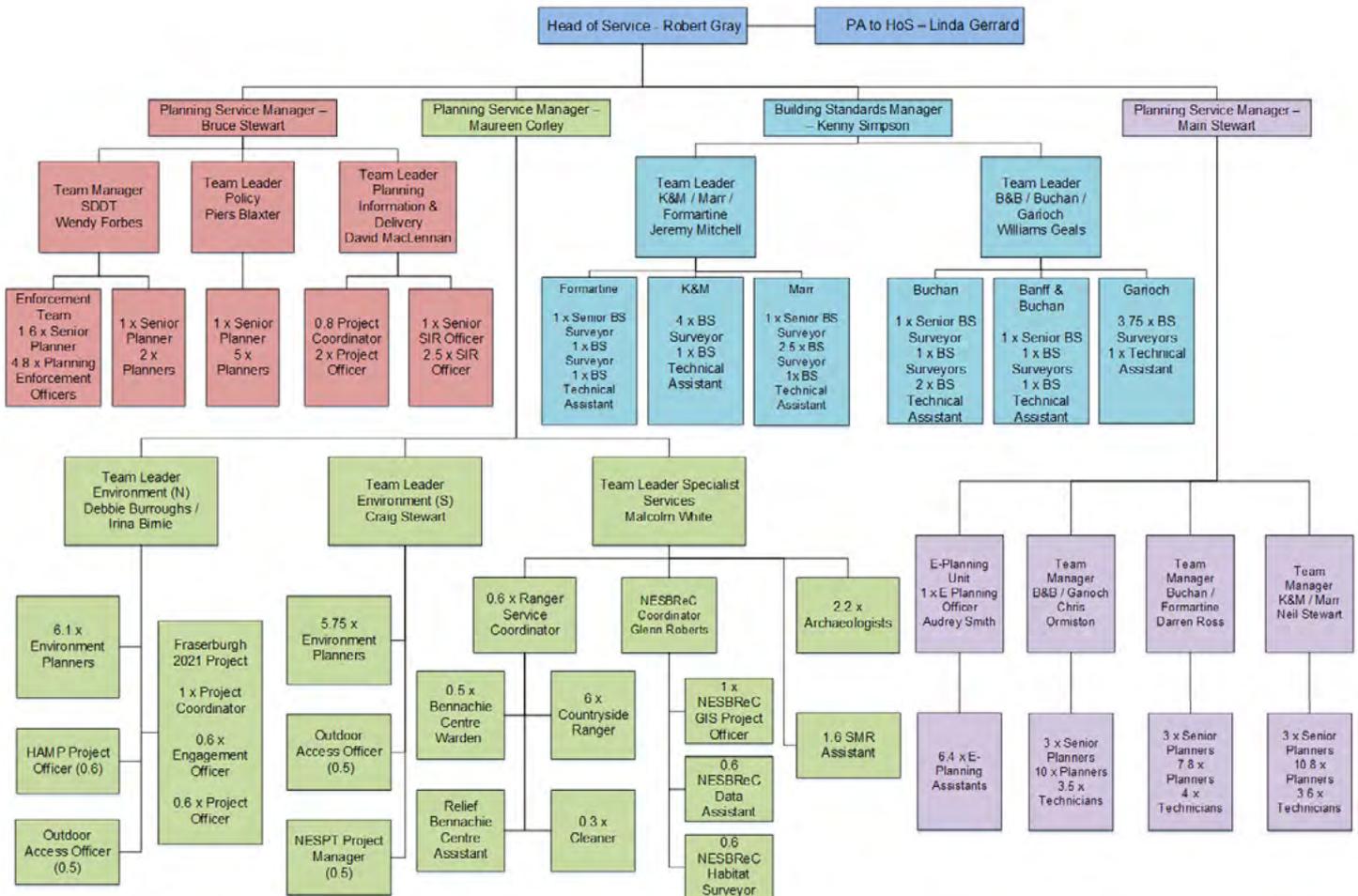
ENFORCEMENT

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY TEAM

POLICY

PLANNING INFORMATION & DELIVERY

ENVIRONMENT



PART 7: PLANNING COMMITTEE INFORMATION

COMMITTEE & SITE VISITS	NUMBER PER YEAR
Full Council meetings	8
Infrastructure Services Committee *	6
Area committees (Where relevant) **	68 + 2 special committees
Committee site visits***	33 + 1 (PDH)
Pre- Determination Hearing (PDH)	1
Local Review Body ****	12
LRB site visits	10

NOTES:

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

**Aberdeenshire Council have 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.



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