

Agenda Item	<b>7</b>
Report No	<b>EDI/68/18</b>

## **HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** Environment, Development and Infrastructure

**Date:** 8 November 2018

**Report Title:** Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 2 Performance Review

**Report By:** Director of Development and Infrastructure

### **1. Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The report advises Members on the delivery and performance of the Planning and Environment Service (Development Management, Building Standards, Development Planning, Transport Planning, Performance and Environment team) for the second Quarter of 2018/2019.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards, Development Plans, Transport Planning, Performance and Environment teams.

### **3 Development Management**

- 3.1 Performance in dealing with planning applications remains high (see **Appendix 1**) with almost 72% of all local planning applications being determined within the two month period, taking an average of 11 weeks. Efforts continue to maintain and improve performance.
- 3.2 The small applications team, set up in 2017 continues to turn around applications at a high rate. Although the figures for Q2 have shown a slight dip, the overall figures for householder applications for Q1 and Q2 this year is that 90% of all householder applications were determined within 2 months. The small drop in performance this quarter, is a reflection of ICT problems encountered during the period which may also have a knock on affect to Q3 figures.
- 3.3 Major applications - 13 majors were determined between April – end September, 9 of which had processing agreements in place. Almost 70% of all major applications over this 6 month period were determined within agreed timescales. Eight major applications were determined within Q2.

### **4. Building Standards**

- 4.1 Performance for responding to warrant applications (KPI1) is 94.1%; this is a significant improvement on last year (60.1%) and a slight improvement on last quarter (92.8%). Performance for responding to completion certificate submissions is 88.5%; this is similar to last year (88.6%) and a slight improvement on last quarter (86.8%) (**Appendix 2**)
- 4.2 When viewing KPI outputs over the 6 internal indicators an average 95.9% is recorded. This is an improvement over last year (90.6%) and a slight increase on last month (95.2%).
- 4.3 The number of building warrant applications received is 773; this is an increase on last year (669) but 9% less than last quarter (854). The number of BWs determined is 756; this is 8% more than last year (696) but 8.5% less than last quarter (826). The slight downturn can be attributed to the summer holiday period and the service anticipates this increasing next quarter.
- 4.4 The value of work submitted is £128m; this is more than last year (£120m) but less than last quarter (£132m). Building warrant fee income is £768k; this is a 28% increase on last year (£554k) but 2% less than last quarter (£786k).
- 4.5 Response times for dealing with BW applications are within reach of target (95%) and the team will continue to concentrate effort on improving first responses. Completion Certificate inspections and inspections of works to comply with the Construction Compliance Notification Plans (CCNP) continues to be the priority and the team is currently exploring the possibility of utilising Modern Apprentices to ensure our responsibilities under CCNP are met.

### **5. Development Plans**

- 5.1 The Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan was formally adopted by the Council on 31 August 2018, following feedback from Scottish Ministers. The West Highland and Islands LDP was submitted to Scottish Ministers for Examination in July.

- 5.2 An innovative public consultation exercise was carried out in Fort William under the FW2040 banner to create a new vision for the town and a Delivery Programme to help coordinate the delivery of major developments and service and infrastructure improvements. The event was jointly funded by the Council, HIE and Scottish Government and was attended by over 120 people representing community groups, businesses, young people and key agencies across Lochaber.
- 5.3 The Local Development Plans team carried out consultation on an update to the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief and engaged with members of the public, affected groups, school pupils and elected members on options for master planning the area. The update to the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief will be published for consultation in Q3. Work will also commence on a new Development Brief for the former Longman Landfill site in Q3.
- 5.4 The Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance was approved by the EDI Committee in August and feedback is awaited from Scottish Ministers on the adoption of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance.
- 5.5 A new Housing Development Team has been established and work is well underway on the first batch of planning applications to be considered by the team. The first applications are expected to be determined in Q3.

## **6. Performance and Systems**

- 6.1 **Mobile Working**  
The Planning and Environment Service is currently focusing on trying to improve the current approach to mobile working via the forthcoming ICT refresh. The service will provide all case officers in Planning and Environment Teams with sim-enabled laptops, whereby they can access back offices systems and files immediately following site visits rather than having to return to the office to do so.
- 6.2 **Road Construction Consent (RCC)**  
New processes went live in January this year which includes new web pages, submission and validation processes for RCC applications. So far feedback from Transport Planning Team, specifically around the effectiveness of the validation process on the quality of applications has been positive. The Team continues to support ePC, Transport Planning and Community Services to establish processes.
- 6.3 **Developer Contributions**  
In tandem with the development of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance a project has been underway over the last 9 months to more effectively manage the collection and spend of contributions sought and received by the Council. They are now being managed via the Planning and Development Conditions Monitoring modules of our case management system, Uniform. The Council has also appointed a Developer Contributions Officer who will liaise with case officers and developers which will help establish roles and responsibilities associated with the new processes.
- 6.4 **System Re-procurement and Business Continuity**  
Focus is shifting towards the re-procurement of the contract for the Planning case and document managements systems, which covers several functions within the service and is currently hosted and managed by Idox Plc. The current five year contract ends on 31 March 2019 with the option of two one year extensions. The Council is likely to take up at least one of these extensions while a longer term procurement exercise is

undertaken, which will seek improvements in certain areas of the contract such as licensing costs, integration, storage costs and business continuity arrangements.

## **7 Transport Planning**

- 7.1 The Transport Planning Team carries out a variety of statutory duties on behalf of the Council in relation to Roads Authority consultations on development management, development planning, and processes the first stage of road construction consent (RCC) applications. The Team liaises with various external organisations such as Transport Scotland and HITRANS across a range of strategic transport proposals. The Team has successfully pursued external funding for active travel and is currently working on a number of projects. The Team also handles the strategic management of the Council airfields.
- 7.2 Q2 saw an officer from HITRANS seconded to the Team to support the City Active Travel Network Project. The team also responded to 240 consultations, the vast majority of which are local planning applications.

## **8 Environment**

- 8.1 The Environment Team carries out a variety of statutory duties on behalf of the Council in relation to development management, development planning, listed buildings and conservation areas, climate change, maintaining access rights and long distance routes. The Team also has an income generating consultancy function. This ensures Council projects discharge statutory duties and planning conditions in relation to protected species, carries out ecological and tree survey work and provides archaeological information and advice to statutory undertakers and consultancies.
- 8.2 Planning and Advice – See **Appendix 3**.  
In Q2 specialist planning advice has been provided in relation to 337 planning applications, including 10 listed building and 7 conservation area consent (demolition in a conservation area) applications. The figures represent the number of applications that can be assessed with the resources currently available, rather than the number of applications that would benefit from specialist input. 28 tree work applications (13 applications for tree work within a TPO, 15 for tree work within a conservation area). The number of tree work applications is known to fluctuate and Q2 saw a drop in number from the previous quarter.
- 8.3 Strategy, Policy and Guidance  
The final Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy, Climate Change Public Duty Paper and Single Use Plastics strategy will be reported to this committee. Granttown-on-Spey Conservation Area Appraisal will be reported to the December South Planning Applications Committee and the Carbon Management Plan/Climate Change Management Plan will be going before full Council in December. The Caithness and Sutherland Core Path Plan (modified and amended) will be reported to the Area Committees in both Caithness and Sutherland in November.
- 8.4 Consultancy
- 8.4.1 The team is on profile to meet its £50,000 annual income target, with £13,802 of income generated in Q2. During this period 34 consultations were received from utilities (including water, electricity and trunk roads) and commercial companies seeking archaeological information and advice. Q2 saw a small drop in consultations from Q1 (where 39 consultations recorded).

8.4.2 There is high demand for the ecological advice service which has limited capacity at the present time. As such, council services seeking ecological input are being directed towards external consultants rather than the more economical and responsive in-house service. Demand for ecological/tree advice is set to increase as new infrastructure projects come on line and other pressures, including Dutch Elm disease, come to the fore. Consideration is being given to expanding the team on a cost-recovery basis to help meet wider Council demand.

## **9. Implications**

9.1 Resource: The Delivery of the services outlined within this report are currently contained within the overall Service Budget.

9.2 Legal, Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural), Climate Change/Carbon Clever, Risk and Gaelic: No implications.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 31 October 2018

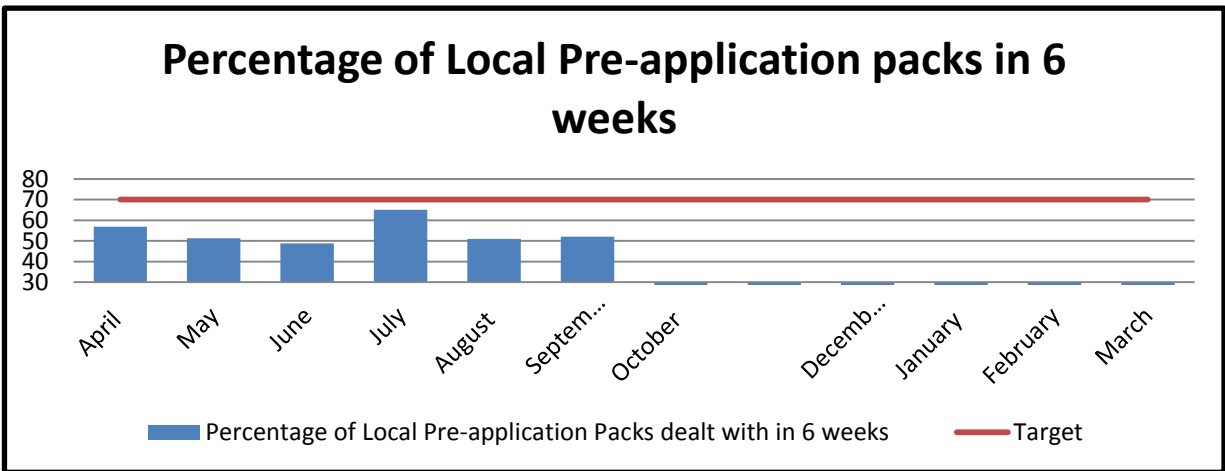
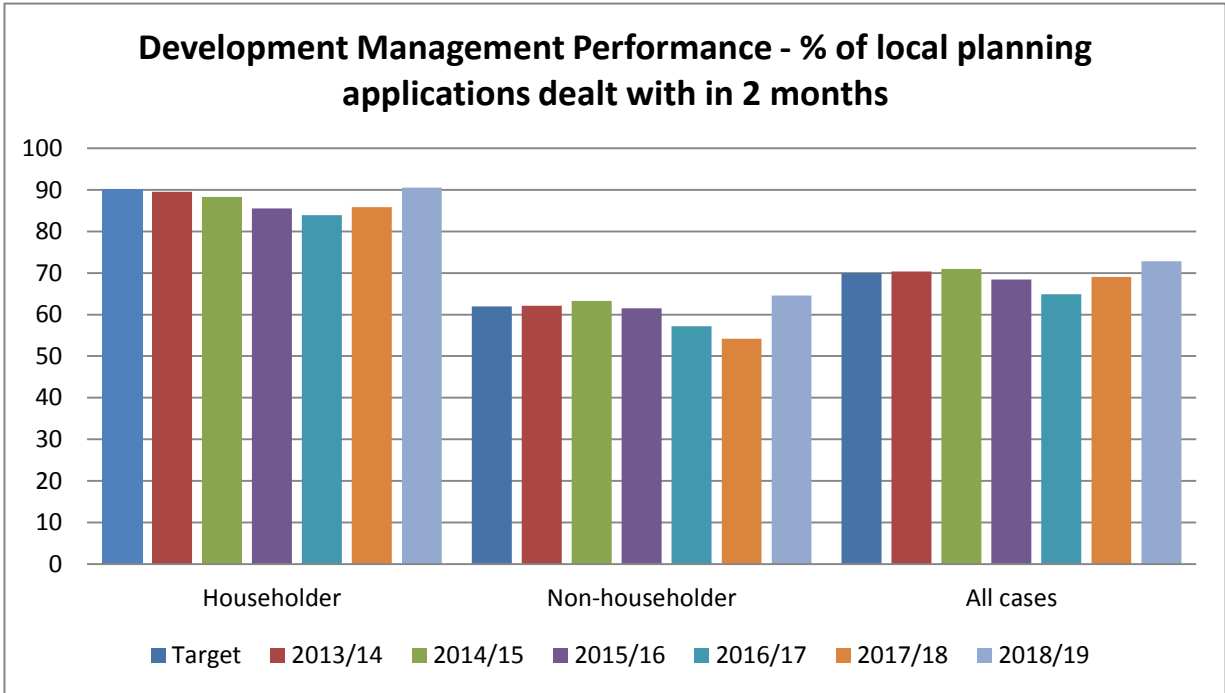
Author: Nicole Wallace, Acting Head of Planning and Environment

## Performance Statistics

Highland  
Quarter 2  
2018/19

<b>Planning Applications</b>			
Category	Total Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales	
<b>Processing Agreements – ( April – September)</b>			
Major Applications	9	69.2	
Local Applications			
EIA developments			
Other Applications			
	Total Number of Decisions	% within timescales*	Average Time (Weeks)
<b>All Major Developments</b>	8		32.0
<b>All Local Developments</b>	615		10.7
Local: less than 2 months	441	71.71	
Local: more than 2 months	174	28.29	
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	441		11.9
Local: less than 2 months	295	66.89	
Local: more than 2 months	146	33.11	
<b>Local developments (householder)</b>	171		7.5
Local: less than 2 months	146	85.38	
Local: more than 2 months	25	14.62	
<b>Other Consents</b>	66		9.4
Other : Less than 2 months	54	81.82	
<b>Enforcement Activity</b>			
	Number		
Cases Taken Up	100		
Notices Served	15		
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0		
Prosecutions	0		
<b>Pre-Application Advice</b>			
Major Packs within 4 weeks	88.89	%	
Local Packs within 6 weeks	56.00	%	

\* 4 months for major developments and 2 months for local developments and other consents



## Appendix 2

### Building Standards Performance 2018/19 Quarter 2

	% Warrants responded to within 20 days	% of Warrants determined within 6 days	% Completion Certificates responded to within 10 days	% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days	Target
<b>2018/19 Q2</b>	94.1	100	88.5	99.2	90
<b>2018/19 Q1</b>	92.8	99	87	99	90
<b>2017/18 Q4</b>	91.3	99	84	99	90
<b>2017/18 Q3</b>	94.1	99	84.5	97.8	90

### Building Standards Volumes and Income (Last 4 Quarters)

	<b>2017/18 Q3</b>	<b>2017/18 Q4</b>	<b>2018/19 Q1</b>	<b>2018/19 Q2</b>
Warrants Decided	557	636	826	709
Completion Certificates	588	541	784	1186
Income (£'000)	£429	£723	£786	£768



### Appendix 3

#### Q2 Environment Consultations

<b>ENVIRONMENT TEAM PLANNING WORK</b>	Planning Applications / PNOs	Listed Building Consent Applications	Conservation Area Consent Applications	Tree Work Applications	<b>TOTAL</b>
Archaeology (x1.2 FTE)	85	0	0	-	<b>85</b>
Forestry (x2 FTE)	124	-	-	28	<b>152</b>
Conservation (x0.8 FTE)	60	10	7	-	<b>77</b>
Access	68	-	-	-	<b>68</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>382</b>