

The Highland Council

Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee

Agenda Item	6
Report No	PDI 3/14

14 May 2014

Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 4 Performance Review

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

This report provides an update on performance against the actions set out within the Planning Service Improvement Plan. This report also advises Members on the delivery of the Development Management, Building Standards and the Development Plan services for the last Quarter of 2013/2014.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Key performance indicator information is reported to committee every Quarter and the outturn figures for the fourth Quarter of 2013/14 are now available.

2. Planning Performance Framework - Service Improvement Plan (SIP)

- 2.1 Appendix 1 sets out the status of actions identified within the SIP for 2013/14, which was agreed by the PED Committee as part of the Planning Performance Framework submitted to Scottish Government in September 2013. These actions were designed to contribute to improved performance and to address service delivery issues and improved customer service.
- 2.2 The majority of actions have progressed well, with performance figures of development management once again surpassing many of the targets set from last year. Many of the service improvement initiatives have been completed, and engagement undertaken with both focus groups and with community councils over the last year.
- 2.3 The SIP actions for 2014/15 will be reported to Committee in August 2014 when approval is sought for the Planning Performance Framework submission to Scottish Government. The key actions that will be taken forward will include:
- Continued emphasis on performance improvements in terms of reducing average times taken and service delivery improvements to dealing with local and major planning applications;
 - Implementing procedures for Member involvement in pre-application advice;
 - Improvements to the Council's e-planning system;

- Greater integration of transport and land use planning; and
- Further customer engagement and survey.

3. Development Management

- 3.1 It is encouraging that the performance continues to build on the improved performance demonstrated last year, and as set out above, the targets set out in the Service Improvement Plan were almost all achieved. The figures set out in Appendix 2 demonstrate that 70% of all planning applications were determined within 2 months.
- 3.2 Enforcement information is shown in Appendix 3. For Quarter 4, 85 enforcement complaints were received: 64 of these were taken up, with 27 cases being resolved through negotiation. Work is continuing on improving enforcement procedures.

4. Building Standards

- 4.1 Building Standards information is shown in Appendix 4. Performance across all 6 KPIs remains constant delivering an average 94%; this equals the Q3 outcome and betters Q4 for 2013. Performance outcomes generally have improved by 2% on the previous year, therefore the service's Balanced Scorecard target, and the Scottish Government's wish to see a year on year improvement, has been achieved.
- 4.2 The number of building warrant applications received during Q4 was 746, an increase of 108 (15%) compared to last year, and 82 (11%) more than Q3. The number of building warrant applications determined during Q4 was 775, an increase of 172 (22%) when compared to last year. The number of completion certificates accepted during Q4 was 509, a drop of 14 (3%) compared to last year.
- 4.3 The value of work submitted for building warrants during Q4 was £90m. An increase of £17m (19%) compared to last year, and a significant increase (49%) on Q3.
- 4.4 Quarter 4 has seen a significant increase in major applications being submitted; applications with a value in excess of £1m. There were 15 applications, the majority being for the erection of new housing developments. Included was the reconstruction of Mingary Castle, Kilchoan, to a dwelling, an educational building for the School of Forestry in Inverness, the refurbishment of office accommodation in Inverness and the erection of a new Primary School in Fort William.
- 4.5 The end of April will see the service's interaction with our customers and Focus Group work come to a close. We will then examine the issues raised, and where suggestions are achievable we will feature these in the service's Improvement Plan for 14/15. A dissemination event for our customers on the recent changes to the regulations will be arranged for May/June.

- 4.5 Staff changes, and the significant increase in workloads being experienced in the Inverness area, will see the service passing more work to outlying area offices to assess in order to maintain performance and an even workload between surveyors. The trainee surveyors are also assisting Inverness by carrying out site inspection duties as part of their on-going training schedule.

4. Development Plans

- 4.1 The focus on town (and city) centres continued through Q4 with the early stages of work for preparing an Inverness City Centre Action Plan to find ways in increasing footfall in the City Centre. This involved a stakeholder workshop and public exhibition where a package of three priority projects was identified by participants. Feedback from the events and the list of priority projects will be presented to the City Task Force in May and then the Inverness City Committee for approval in June.
- 4.2 Preparations are also being made for a similar series of events to be held throughout April and May to draw up Town Centre Action Plans for Tain, Fort William and Nairn. The focus of these events will be to identify the best ways of delivering town centre regeneration, and to create the conditions for increasing footfall and encouraging investment.
- 4.3 Following a 6 week consultation on the Inner Moray Firth Proposed Local Development Plan between September and December, the team has been preparing draft responses to the issues raised for presentation to Committee in May. Committee approval would allow us to progress to the next stage towards adoption of the Plan, beginning with a formal Examination in Public.
- 4.4 The team has made good progress with environmental assessments for all potential development sites submitted to the Council for consideration in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan). We have also discussed the emerging issues across the Plan with Members through Ward Business Meetings including a set of shared outcomes that the Council's partners and communities think the Plan should address, to help deliver the Single Outcome Agreement 3 (SOA) in the CaSPlan area.
- 4.5 Joint work has continued between transport and planning officers and Transport Scotland, to discuss options for addressing transport issues and guiding future development opportunities in the Inshes and Raigmore area of Inverness. Joint public exhibitions by the Council and Transport Scotland are proposed for late May / early June.

5. Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct resource, legal, equalities, climate change/Carbon Clever or risk implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the progress made against the actions set out within the Planning Service Improvement Plan, as well as the performance updates for the Development Management, Building Standards and the Development Plans teams.

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Date: 2 May 2014

Planning Performance - Service Improvement Plan 2013/14

Actions	Progress Update	RAG Status
Open for Business		
We will deliver 100% of Major Pre-application packs within 4 weeks .	100% of pre-application packs have been issued in 4 weeks. 31 packs were issued during 2012-13.	G
We will deliver at least 80% of Local Pre-application packs within 6 weeks .	67% of pre-application packs were issued within 4 weeks which falls short of the target set. The delivery of pre-application advice is very important and efforts are being made to ensure that improved performance is seen next year.	R
We will ensure that all Major Development proposals are accompanied by Processing Agreements by end of June 2013.	All planning applications for major developments have been offered Processing Agreements since June 2013. The vast majority of applicants have agreed to enter into these, and they now form a very important part of the service offered by the Council.	G
High Quality Development on the Ground		
We will prepare and publicise a presentation of high quality developments supported by the Service by March 2014 .	This is now complete, and will be an important input to the preparation of Planning Performance Framework 3, which will be submitted to Scottish Government in September 2014.	G
We will prepare Development Plans Scheme by April 2013 and prepare a progress report by September 2013.	Development Plan Scheme prepared, reported to Committee and made available on the web-site. Regular updates are provided to Committee.	G
We will prepare our Plan documents in line with the timescales set out in the Development Plans Scheme.	Development Plans consultations and publications were prepared in line with the Development Plan Scheme although charrette-style public consultations on Development Briefs have led to slippage in the preparation of Local Development Plans. It is hoped that this slippage can be caught up during the overall preparation timescales.	A
We will deliver the actions within Development Plan Action Programmes to stated timescales.	Actions are being delivered to stated timescales.	G
Certainty		
We will deliver at least 70% of Scoping Opinions within 5 Weeks .	Only 27% of scoping opinions were issued within 5 weeks (10/37), which is well short of the target response time. Options will be assessed to improve performance in dealing with scoping opinions, including looking at whether there should be one point of contact, developing protocols for consulting other services and agencies and assessing whether further training is required.	R
We will deliver at least 60% of Screening Opinions within 21 Days .	40% were dealt with within 21 days, which although short of the target was a 10% improvement from the previous year. As above, options will be assessed to improve performance in this area.	R
We will implement the Protocols for Enterprise Areas and deliver development to stated timescales.		G
We will put in place more effective Monitoring Systems for Development Plans (audits) during 2013/14.	The Research and Information team has developed the monitoring database to ensure that information is readily available for development plans and general information requirements.	G
Financial Management and Local Governance		
We will contribute to a national project on costs of delivering the planning service.	Highland Council was one of 16 local authorities to take part in the costings project at the end of last year. The findings have been used to inform discussions with the Scottish Government on cost recovery for the planning process.	G

Communications, engagement and customer service		
We will deliver Focus Groups for Planning across the Highland area during 2013/14.	Focus Groups have been held throughout the Highland area. Feedback is being pulled together to identify potential service improvements.	G
We will provide Community Council planning training during 2013/14.	We have held Community Council planning training throughout the Highland area during 2013/14. Some of the key issues that have been raised include potential changes to the format of weekly lists, the need for regular newsletters and the need to engage fully in the development plans process.	G
We will provide evidence of efforts to engage with hard to reach groups during 2013/14.	Emphasis this year has been on engagement with schools, ranging from primary to secondary, Specific engagement has been taking place in connection with the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan.	G
We will carry out a comprehensive customer survey during 2013/14 and prepare an action plan from the results.	Survey Monkey links at the bottom of e-mails have again been used to generate customer feedback. The action plan has not yet been completed and the intention is to carry out more structured feedback over the next year.	A
Efficient and Effective Decision Making		
We will achieve at least an average of 24 weeks for determination of major planning applications.	The average time taken to deal with applications for major developments during 2013/14 was 17.6 weeks.	G
We will achieve at least an average of 11 weeks for determination of local planning applications.	The average time taken to deal with applications for local developments during 2013/14 was 11.0 weeks.	G
We will achieve at least an average of 9 weeks for determination of Other applications.	The average time taken to deal with other applications was 10.8 weeks.	A
We will determine at least 68% of all Planning Applications within 2 Months.	During 2013/14 70% of all applications were dealt with within 2 months	G
We will determine at least 90% of Householder Planning Applications within 2 Months .	During 2013/14 90% of all applications were dealt with within 2 months	G
We will determine at least 60% of Non Householder Planning Applications within 2 Months.	During 2013/14 62% of all Non householder planning applications were dealt with within 2 months.	G
We will put in place procedures to ensure that legal agreements are concluded within 4 months following a minded to grant decision.	A report detailing new procedures was agreed by the PED Committee - the process still being implemented, and legacy cases are being addressed in a more structured way than previously.	G
Effective Management Structures		
We will ensure that all staff have Employee Review and Development Plans delivered by end June 2013 and the Service Training Plan produced and implemented by end August 2013.	ERDs were completed and a Service Training Plan developed. Bespoke training courses have been delivered, tailored for the requirements identified within the process.	G
Culture of Continuous Improvement		
We will implement a new Enforcement Charter by June 2013.	A new Enforcement Charter has been prepared and published.	G
We will prepare and implement a Validation Checklist for use by October 2013.	The validation checklist has been produced and is being used on an informal basis. Further development of the checklist is awaiting a national initiative.	G
We will implement Development Management for Enterprise by March 2014.	Work on the roll-out of Enterprise has been carried out and is complete prior to roll-out. Capacity issues with IDOX are being addressed to allow use of the system to full capacity.	G

We will implement the Uniform Module for Enforcement and new processes for Enforcement by December 2013.	Enforcement processes have been overhauled and new arrangements put in place to help deliver a more efficient service.	G
We will design and implement new systems for gathering, administering and analysing Development Plan responses by March 2014.	The Council commissioned new web-based software for gathering Development Plan consultations known as Wufoo. The system enabled the team to design a tailor-made website for gathering representations and this was trialled in a Call For Sites Exercise for the Caithness & Sutherland LDP before being used on the Inner Moray Firth Proposed LDP consultation. The system was extremely efficient in gathering comments thanks to over 80% of comments being submitted online (through hyperlinks from an online version of the Plan) for the IMF Plan. Investigations are continuing into a system which provides similar benefits to Wufoo but allows more effective analysis of comments and maintenance of customer details.	G
We will carry out a benchmarking exercise with other rural planning authorities (Aberdeenshire/Dumfries and Galloway/Scottish Borders/Argyll & Bute) during 2013/14.	Two benchmarking meetings have been held with the rural authorities benchmarking group.	G
We will prepare our Planning Performance Framework for submission to Scottish Government by end September 2013.	The PPF was completed and submitted by the due date.	G

APPENDIX 2

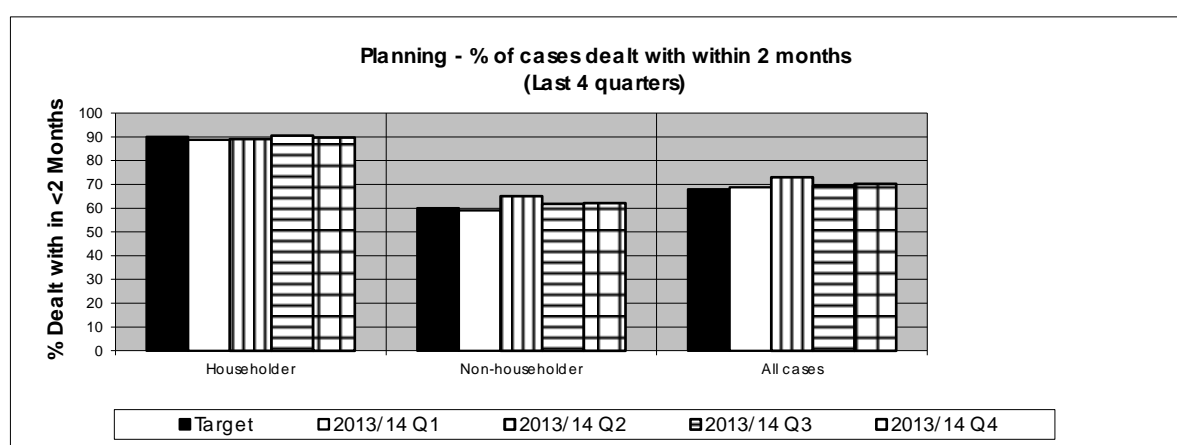
Development Management Performance Quarter 4 2013/14

i) Development Management Volumes and Income (Last four Quarters)

	2013/14 Q1	2013/14 Q2	2013/14 Q3	2013/14 Q4
Applications	1216	1161	1072	1167
Income (£000)	591	670	613	493

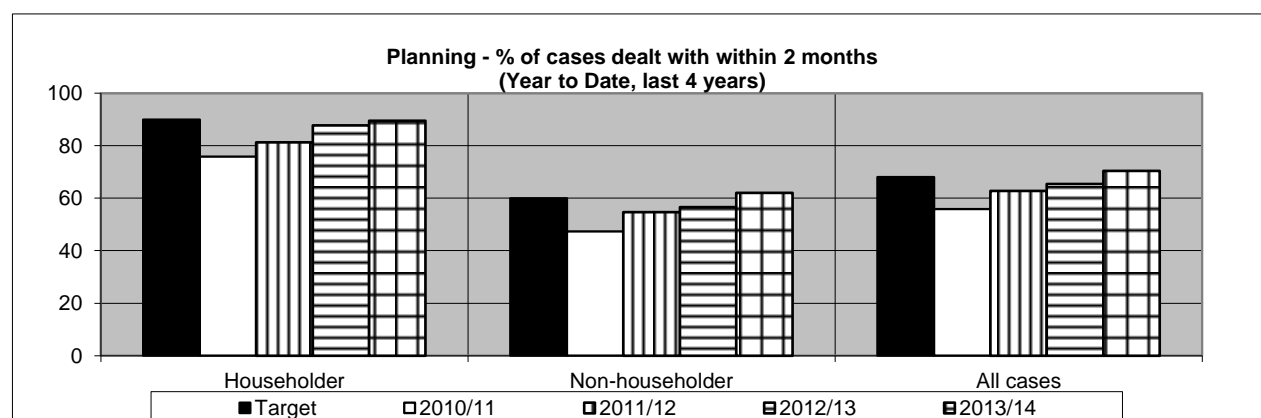
ii) Percentage of Cases Dealt with Within 2 Months (last four Quarters)

	Target	2013/14 Q1	2013/14 Q2	2013/14 Q3	2013/14 Q4
Householder	90	88.74	89.04	90.48	89.71
Non-householder	60	58.98	65.13	61.83	62.14
All cases	68	68.83	73.08	69.40	70.29



iii) Percentage of Cases Dealt with Within 2 Months (Annual)

	Target	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Householder	90	75.83	81.40	87.76	89.54
Non-householder	60	47.32	54.80	56.66	62.09
All cases	68	55.91	62.80	65.49	70.39



Appendix 3 - Enforcement

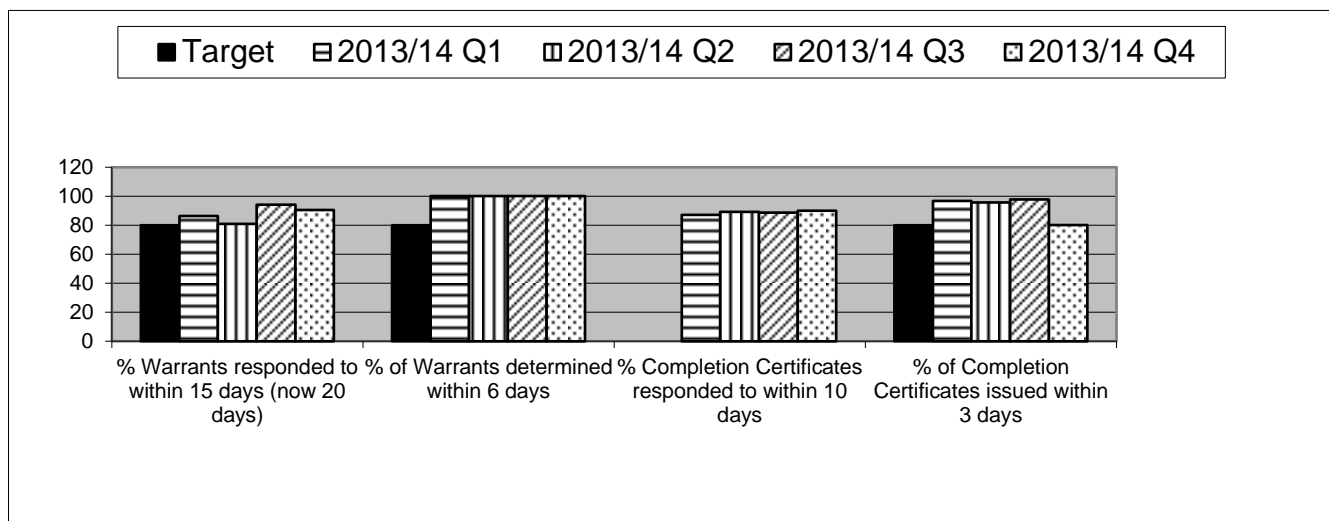
QUARTER 4 2013/14	No of Enforcement Complaints Received	No of Breaches Identified	No of Cases Taken Up (Breaches pursued)	No of Breaches Resolved (through negotiation - No Notice Served)	Total No of Notices Served (All Types)	No of Breaches resolved	No of Cases Outstanding	No of Enforcement Notices	No of Breach Notices	No of Contravention Notices	No of Stop Notices	No of Temp Stop Notice	No of FPN	No of Section 33	No of Reports to Procurator Fiscal	No of Prosecutions
DINGWALL	14	10	13	4	0	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DRUMMUIE	4	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
INV & NAIRN	38	27	27	14	5	19	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KINGUSSIE	10	10	10	5	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOCHABER	10	6	6	2	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SKYE	9	7	7	2	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WICK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	85	61	64	27	7	33	30	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX 4

Building Standards Performance Quarter 4 2013/14

i) Performance against targets, fourth quarter

	Target	2013/14 Q1	2013/14 Q2	2013/14 Q3	2013/14 Q4
% Warrants responded to within 15 days (now 20 days)	80	86.40	81.00	94.12	90.40
% of Warrants determined within 6 days	80	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
% Completion Certificates responded to within 10 days	n/a	87.20	89.20	88.60	90.10
% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days	80	96.60	95.70	97.84	80.00



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

	2013/14 Q1	2013/14 Q2	2013/14 Q3	2013/14 Q4
Warrants Decided	824	766	782	775
Compl. Certs	680	586	586	509
Income (£000)	478	495	378	554