

PLANNING AND ACCESS COMMITTEE

MEETING: NPA/PC/08/2014

DATE: 15th December 2014

REPORT No.	NPA/PC/08/2014/04
SUBMITTED BY:	Head of Planning and Rural Development
SUBJECT:	Planning Performance Framework 3 2013/2014

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1 SUMMARY AND REASON FOR PRESENTATION

- 1.1 This paper provides Members with an update on our 3rd annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, which was submitted to Scottish Government on 26th September 2014 (Appendix 1)

2 RECOMMENDATION

That Members:

- 1. Note the content of this report and the Planning Performance Framework document as appended.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The focus of the Planning Performance Framework process (which replaces previous Improvement Plans) is to ensure continuous improvement of all planning authorities in Scotland. Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) - the representative organisation for senior planning officers from Scotland's local authorities, national park authorities and strategic development planning authorities – lead the establishment of this process. They advise that it is a “more holistic framework for assessing planning authority performance and improvement” so that planning “can achieve its potential in supporting the Government’s Economic Strategy”.

4 PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2 FEEDBACK

4.1 Scottish Government provided feedback to the National Park on last year's Report (PPF 2 2012/2013), the highlights of this are summarised below:

- Impressed with the dedication of the planners and their willingness to play a role in the improvement of the service they provide.
- Recognition of a very strong commitment to engagement across stakeholders.
- The report provides a strong indicator of the National Park working well with the culture envisaged through the PPF.
- Demonstrated a strong commitment to a pro-active and helpful pre-application service... and increased take-up of this service is welcomed.
- The National Parks use of processing agreements is noted and encouraged as an effective project management approach to the determination of applications.
- It is noted that significant time savings were achieved for the average timescale for determining applications subject to legal agreements and fully support our ongoing project to conclude 'stalled cases'.
- The Government supports the National Parks focus to 'front load' the process through early identification and resolution of issues rather than debate and dispute through appeals and local reviews.
- Acknowledge that the National Park is taking forward a good range of initiatives to influence the delivery of good quality development and the enhancement of places.

4.2 The feedback report also contained some recommendations for the year ahead. The main points are below:

- It is noted that the National Park has not carried out a customer feedback survey, obtaining wider feedback is encouraged.
- Further clarification on Enforcement breaches resolved whether through formal action or voluntary resolution would be helpful.
- The National Park's decision making average timescales for local developments has increased. However, Scottish Government recognised the impact within a small team from substantial cases and the increased caseload.
- Scottish Government noted that developer contributions protocols are being developed but required more information to ensure proportionality through policy and engagement.

5 PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 3

5.1 The PPF3 submission – attached as Appendix 1 to this report – seeks to address the above recommendations and presents a positive and clear assessment of our performance during the reporting year April to April 2013/2014. This year we have included ‘Project Focus’ items throughout the report to highlight specific areas of work that identify good practice. These focus on:

- Our approach to Hydro Development;
- Working with Processing Agreements;
- LIVE Park; and
- Applications subject to Legal Agreements.

5.2 We have recognised that some of the agreed service improvement tasks (Part 4 of the PPF report) as set out in PPF2 were not completed. Those that remain priority items have been carried over into PPF3. We have improved the scope of our service improvement tasks this year prioritising those projects that current working experiences have highlighted require our attention.

Some of our key actions include:

- Prepare and implement a service agreement with our internal specialist advisors.
- Devise an approach to obtain customer service feedback.
- Review procedures for applications subject to processing agreements - to reduce targets not being met.
- Continue the Rural Housing Enabler project.
- Develop a mechanism to monitor the added value of developments.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The PPF report continues to be a key tool for measuring reporting and publicising our ongoing commitment to progress the quality of our planning service. It also sets our target improvement areas for the year ahead. Members are asked to note its content along with the positive feedback from the Scottish Government on last year’s report.

Background Documents: *Planning Performance Framework Guidance –*
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/modernising/cc/ImprovementPlans>

List of Appendices: *Appendix 1 Planning Performance Framework 3 (2013 – 2014)*