

# Planning Performance Framework

2014–2015

# Contents

**Our Priorities** ..... 3

**Introduction** ..... 4

**Part 1:** National Headline Indicators..... 5

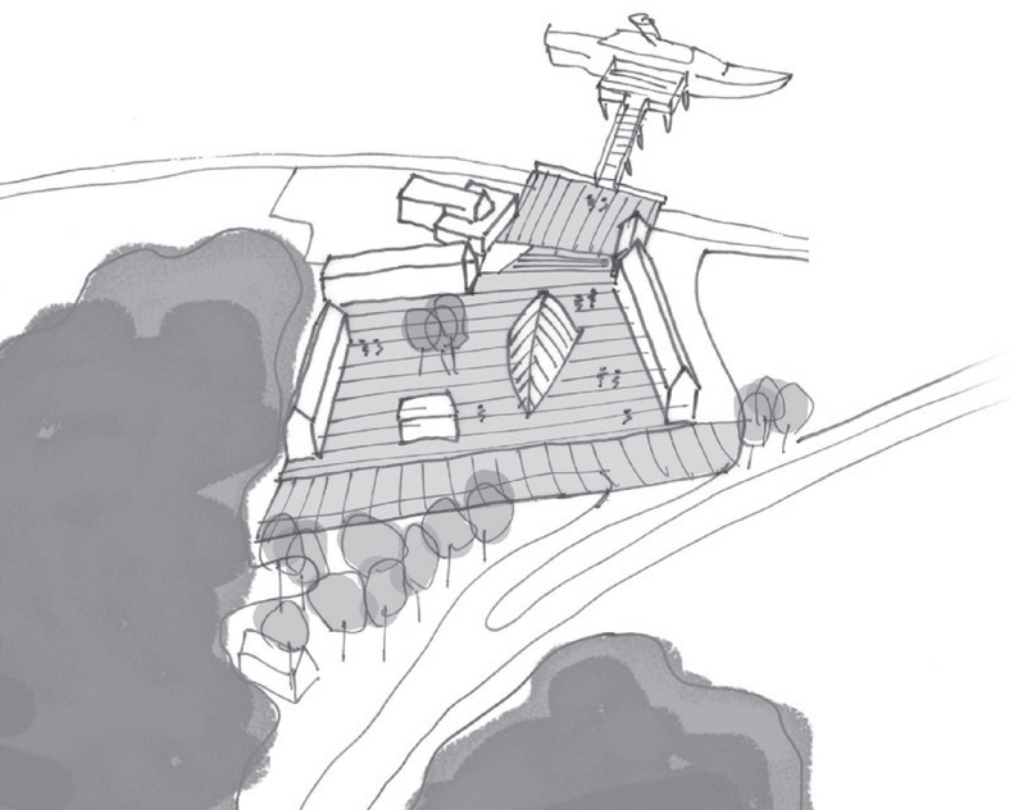
**Part 2:** Defining and Measuring a High-Quality Planning Service..... 10

**Part 3:** Supporting Evidence ..... 31

**Part 4:** Service Improvements..... 32

**Appendix I** Official Statistics ..... 36

**Appendix II** Workforce and Financial Information ..... 41





# Our Priorities



## Delivering new Scottish Government priorities

All of our plans are aligned to the priorities of the Scottish Government. Its Programme for Government 2014-15 emphasises three main themes:

- Creating more, better paid jobs in a strong, sustainable economy
- Building a fairer Scotland and tackling inequality
- Passing power to people and communities

Our work in Rural Development covers our role as a Planning Authority and has a strong focus on supporting our vibrant communities, as well as promoting and safeguarding our unique built heritage.



# Introduction



This Planning Performance Framework ensures continuous improvement of our service and is a requirement of all planning authorities in Scotland.

It represents a *“holistic framework for assessing planning authority performance and improvement”* so that planning *“can achieve its’ potential in supporting the Government’s Economic Strategy”* (Heads of Planning Scotland).

This is the fourth annual framework report (PPF4) for the National Park. It looks back at last year (April 2014/ through to April 2015) firstly statistically then qualitatively by describing projects, achievements and initiatives that have improved our service. We then focus on our service improvement (SI) commitments for the year ahead 2015/16 known as our ‘Improvement Plan’.

Scottish Government feedback on PPF3 was overall very positive confirming that the National Park *“embraces the PPF culture and identified many annual improvements”*. Throughout this report, however, focus is made on addressing any areas for improvement that have been identified in the feedback reports.



# Part 1

## National Headline indicators

Key Outcomes	2014-2015	2013-2014
<b>Development Planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i></li> <li>● Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N)</li> <li>● Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N)</li> <li>● Were development plan scheme engagement/ consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N)</li> </ul> <p><small>* Revised timescales were reflected in our updated DPS approved by our Board in April and published in May.</small></p>	<p>3 years 4 months Y</p> <p>Y*</p> <p>Y</p>	<p>2 years 4months N</p> <p>N</p> <p>Y</p>
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Established housing land supply</li> <li>● 5-year effective housing land supply</li> <li>● 5-year housing supply target</li> <li>● 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) *</li> <li>● Housing approvals</li> <li>● Housing completions over the last 5 years</li> <li>● Marketable employment land supply</li> <li>● Employment land take-up during reporting year</li> </ul> <p><small>* Additional sites identified in the Proposed Local Development Plan (May 2015) will increase the effective land supply, these are not included in the above figure. An allowance for windfall development is also factored into the future housing land supply of 30 units per annum. This will provide an estimated 150 units over 5 years, providing effective land supply for 6.4 years. *</small></p> <p><small>*1 Please note that this reduction is due to the Park no longer counting Tourism related land and Employment Land to be more in line with class uses 4,5,6.</small></p> <p><small>*2 this figure is for Adopted Local Plan allocated sites only and discounts windfall development.</small></p>	<p>427 units 329 units 375 units 4.4 years 73 units 110 units 53.6 ha*<sup>1</sup> 2.15 ha*<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>415 units 398 units 375 units 5.3 years 70 units 153 units 94.87ha Not available</p>

Key Outcomes	2014-2015	2013-2014
<b>Development Management:</b> <b>Project Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice</li> <li>numbers of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan</li> <li>percentage planned timescales met</li> </ul> <b>Decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>application approval rate</li> <li>delegation rate</li> </ul>	28% 0 Major (Other- 43) 48.8%	39% N/A 52.2%
<b>Decision-making timescales</b> <i>Average Number of Weeks to Decision</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major developments</li> <li>Local developments (non-householder)</li> <li>Householder developments</li> </ul>	13.1 weeks 14.3 weeks 8.6 weeks	26.3 weeks 13.8 weeks 8.2 weeks
<b>Legacy Cases</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number cleared during reporting period</li> <li>Number remaining</li> </ul>	11 17	– –
<b>Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time since enforcement charter reviewed (months) <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i></li> <li>Number of breaches identified/resolved</li> </ul>	12 months  15 identified/ 10 resolved	1 month  31 identified/ 20 resolved



## National Headline Indicator Contextual Statement

The National Park Authority's planning function is within our Planning & Rural Development Service which also delivers our work with communities, to support their capacity to deliver their own projects, and the protection of our historic environment. This past year has seen another busy year in terms of casework, our wider programmes in relation to communities and the historic environment along with significant progress in preparing on our new Local Development Plan. The text below provides some commentary surrounding the National Headlines.



### Development Planning

Over the past year we have successfully delivered a modern consultation on our **Main Issues Report**. This was a wide ranging consultation which included extensive social media use (*Refer Project Focus: LIVE Park*) as well as more traditional engagement. Due to a number of new or amended sites being submitted a second 'Additional Sites' consultation was required during November and December. Despite this, by April we had largely prepared the Proposed Local Development Plan and a suite of Draft Guidance documents to support the Plan. This was a significant area of work requiring cross organisation support and was the culmination of over 3 years work

We have reviewed allocated development sites as part of our Main Issues Report last year. Various developments being built and planning permissions on allocated sites have resulted in the reduction of the effective Housing Land Supply, this has been addressed in our Proposed Local Development Plan which includes a number of additional housing sites. Our monitoring of planning approvals for housing reveals a sustained, strong contribution from windfall development throughout the rural area and an allowance for this is included in the future housing land supply.

The allocated employment land supply has reduced slightly with the development of the former garage site being developed in Balloch for retail units and housing. However, the Proposed Local Development Plan has identified new sites which will be reflected in next year's Planning Performance Framework report.

## Development Management

**Overall application numbers** received through 2014/15 remained fairly consistent with 2013/14 until the turn of the year but from January there was a notable pick up in the number of applications received – up 45% from the equivalent Q4 period in the previous year. The total number of logged pre-app enquiries decreased slightly from 283 to 275 across the review period. The proportion of householder applications remains fairly consistent with the level established through 2012/13 at 25% of all applications received.

### The key performance highlights to note are as follows:

- The **stand out statistic** for the National Park remains the efficient determination of EIA applications. The National Park considered 10% of the total EIA casework across Scotland for the period. The speed of decision on such applications improved from 18.4 weeks in 2013/14 to 14 weeks in 2014/15. The Scottish average is reliably estimated to remain at around 40 weeks (published figures were not available at the time of preparing this report). This evidences the on-going work that is being undertaken jointly with the specialist advisors in our Conservation Team to secure a co-ordinated 'one team' approach to work on these complex applications – and our efficiencies in this area of work are evidenced in our Project Focus - EIA applications. The on-going improved performance on EIA applications is considered particularly significant in the National Park context.
- Connected to the above is the figure for 'Electricity Generation' applications, average determination time in the National Park was 10.3 weeks for 2014/15, improved from last year when we reported 17 weeks. The Scottish average for 2013/14 was 23.1 weeks. This includes run-of-river hydro applications of which 10 were determined in the period. The statistics re-affirm the prioritisation we continue to give to these cases in order to support the renewable energy sector in Scotland. (*Refer Project Focus - Implementation of Run-of-river hydro schemes*)





The statistics evidence a slight decline in the average determination time for 'householder', 'local non householder' and 'legal agreement' development types in comparison with the PPF3 reporting period. 'Other' applications remained steady, while there has been an improvement in speed of decision for 'Major' and 'EIA' applications as noted above. In many categories the determination time remains slightly behind the Scottish average, nevertheless, **securing a year on year improvement** in our own performance is considered to be the more significant target.

The number of outstanding 'legacy' cases, at 17, is a disappointingly high number. The review process of the PPF has been useful to highlight the number of cases that are falling within the revised definition (1 year old). There are a variety of reasons for the delay on the range of cases identified. Some have been stalled by a consultation issue - such as flooding or a road safety concern - but with a delayed submission of supporting information by the applicant or an ongoing negotiation.

Three cases carried over from this reporting period pertain to the conclusion of Legal Agreements. Whilst it is disappointing not to have secured an improvement in the overall average determination period for 'legal agreements', the downturn was due to one particular case which it was considered prudent and allowed to run rather than be returned to the Planning and Access Committee for reconsideration as there was a clear indication that

a positive outcome could be secured. A renewed focus on efficiencies around the number of 'live' legacy cases at any particular time has been included as a Service Improvement action for the year ahead (Refer Service Improvement No.1).

The approval rate for all applications remains high at 97.5% in 2014/15 compared to 96.6% in 2013/14. The National Park continues to consistently approve a higher proportion of applications than the Scottish average. This is attributed to our on-going commitment to engagement in pre-application discussions – read more in Part 2 Open for Business.

In conclusion, the published statistics remain encouraging in light of the significant progress made to update our Local Plan and the on-going pressure which the Service team came under to priority determine a number of run-of-river hydro power applications to an OFGEM 'feed in tariff' deadline of 31st December 2014. Prioritisation of these often sensitive and complex applications had an impact on other application workload in the Q3 period. It also put significant demands on the Conservation Team's specialist advisors who were required to input on matters of landscape and ecology. Starts on site noticeably increased through the Q4 period, requiring a transfer of staff resource to support the Monitoring Officer role – at a time when the Service was also finalising the Proposed Plan for consultation - and ensure the timeous discharge of pre-start conditions. The

significant increase in the number of applications received through this final quarter of the monitoring period is also a trend being kept under close review.

Operating a Planning Service in a National Park raises unique challenges. Most notably in terms of effective partnership working with the underlying Local Authorities and ensuring due regard for the sensitive landscape and natural heritage designations. It cannot operate to a 'standard' Local Authority model. In many planning application cases delays are unavoidable for the necessary supporting survey work to be undertaken, and significant projects have inevitable staff resource impact within a small team.

## Part 2

# Defining and Measuring a high-quality planning Service

### Open for Business

#### We are Open for Business because we:

- Take pride in our **open and accessible approach** to all development proposals with an emphasis on negotiation and discussions to achieve a positive outcome.
- Operate our **pre-application service** in common with this approach. This is demonstrably having a positive and sustained influence on the approval rate for applications and is therefore a worthwhile deployment of our limited planning staff resource – focusing on providing constructive advice at an early stage rather than contesting appeals. The pre-app service is a key tool to achieve the following aims:
  - Better quality of applications at submission (with all required supporting information having been flagged early).
  - Improved certainty for applicants on likely outcome and timescales.
  - Less refusals – our approval rate (97.5% for the review period) remains consistently above the national figure
  - Less appeals / Local Reviews (we only handled 4 local reviews and 2 appeal cases in the review period)

This proactive service ensures early consideration of the detail and quality of a proposal. We ensure consistency by using a set response template that highlights the policies, the considerations for the application and information that should be submitted with an application. We undertake site meetings, consultations and request further information where needed. We provide meetings to discuss proposals and guide the development. On significant cases we use this process to give early advice on the provision of a proportionate level of supporting information – as well as the requirement for any legal agreement or developer contribution. For this reporting period we have made particular improvements to our EIA screening and scoping procedures (*Refer: Project Focus - EIA applications*).

We continue to receive and respond to almost as many pre application enquiries as planning applications. Wherever possible the case officer engaged on the pre-application will continue to handle the subsequent application – in the interests of consistency. No charge is levied for our pre-application service. The number of cases handled clearly has a staff resource implication but the service is considered to have overall benefits for the reasons as set out above.





- Carefully balance the natural heritage sensitivities in our National Park area and **request proportionate information** to assist in determining an application. Our website provides clear information on what level of information is expected of the applicant and at pre-application this is confirmed. Given the protected status of the National Park Designation the authority is required to screen all applications under the EIA regulations. Of those that do require an Environmental Statement, our scoping responses carefully focus on only those issues that are necessary to the planning decision. One of our Service Improvement actions in PPF3 was to develop updated procedures on EIA screening and scoping. This has been completed through the review period (Refer: Project Focus - EIA Applications) and has made an important contribution toward ensuring proportionate requests as well as more efficient working practice. This includes display of screening and scoping opinions through the e-planning website, step-by-step procedures for handling a screening request, a template for scoping opinions for run-of-river hydro schemes and clear instructions for planning support staff to follow to manage the workflow of such applications.

- Maintaining an up to date Development Plan through a process that actively **supports engagement with land owners and agents** to progress the development proposals - *Refer also to section on promoting allocated sites under 'High Quality Development on the Ground'*. We strive to create confidence for private sector decision making by producing transparent, easily understood, plans and policies. This approach has been reflected in our modern Main Issues Report (April 2014) and will be carried forward in our Proposed Local Development Plan (2015). We also seek to deliver more inward investment for economic regeneration by delivering a highly efficient development management service again to create confidence in investment decisions. We are customer focussed and we have created protocols with partners to create a seamless service but one which builds added value through partnership working to create more jobs and training opportunities through National Programmes with partners and the Third Sector.
- Operate to a **Planning Service Charter** which sets out our promises to users of our service that we will provide a responsive service – *read more in Communication Engagement and Customer Service section.*
- We have a dedicated **development monitoring officer** who brings improved efficiencies to the service at post-decision stage. This role has come under growing pressure through the

review period as the number of starts on site has increased significantly from the 'lean period' of 2008 – 2013. This has been particularly evident for run-of-river hydro development within the Park (Refer: Project Focus - Implementation of Run-of-river hydro schemes). These developments are in sensitive locations and are subject to numerous pre-start conditions and on-going restoration monitoring requirements. They require a well-structured approach by the monitoring officer and the planning case officer who work in close co-operation with the applicants and agents to agree further submission of information within condition deadlines and any amendments as the project progresses. Further refining procedures around this important area of work is required for the year ahead.

- Ensure applicants have **direct access to case officers** by phone or email during the application process and provide **access to our Head of Planning** on large cases where early consideration is required of the principle of development. Case officers meet with agents and applicants, when required, on site or at our offices to negotiate improvements and resolve issues. Our validation letter provides direct contact details (email/phone) for case officers to ensure there is a single point of contact during the application. On larger cases **processing agreements** are now used as standard practice and contact details for managers is also provided.

## High Quality Development on the Ground

### We deliver High Quality Development on the Ground because we:

- Are maintaining an up to date Local Plan by progressing our Local Development Plan stages in a **proactive** way with all partners and stakeholders.
- Made every effort to effectively engage and consult with people as we prepare our first National Park Local Development Plan. We use a variety of engagement methods, and try new ones such as blogs, facebook and twitter, to engage with all members of our communities, including young people. By taking a design led, place making approach we were able to show and consider what kind of development can be achieved through our **Main Issues Report consultations**
- Continued our suite of **Supplementary and Planning Guidance** by preparing draft Guidance on 8 planning topics.
- Continuing to support **updated Community Action Plans** – with 10 now revised and 4 being prepared.
- Operate a **Built Heritage Repair Grant Scheme** which, in its second year, delivered successful projects located across the Park in Gartmore, Drymen, Callander, Aberfoyle, Milton and Luss and included four listed buildings. The £20,000 Built Heritage Repair Grant fund for 2014/15 delivered projects to a value of £67,216 compared to £66,809 in 2013/14, (excluding an on-going chimney repair project and the Hogback stone which have an additional total project value of £23,700) (Refer: *Project Focus – Built Heritage Repair Grant*).
- We have seen some notable **community projects** delivered on the ground, which we supported, including the opening of the new Gartmore Village Hall, the construction of a new off-road path connecting Drymen and Milton of Buchanan and the completion of the Callander community hydro scheme – a community-led project delivering social and economic benefits in a way sensitive to its National Park setting.



- Continue to use **press releases** to highlight the added value of the planning service to the National Park in specific high profile planning approvals for example the Callander Community Hydro release which was picked up by Business Green and the Stirling Observer among others.

The 'planning story' on two further hydro schemes on the Glenfalloch Estate was released to the same distribution with pick-up in the likes of The Scotsman. We also worked with the National Park tourism team to get advice out to walkers wishing to walk the West Highland Way and businesses along the route, so they could help spread the word about possible disruption.



- There has been a range of **new developments completed and under construction** right across the Park. These projects are diverse and include: a mixed use (residential and retail) development at Balloch Riverside, a budget hotel and bar restaurant in Balloch, a substantial electrical switching station at Sloy, 14 dwelling houses at the former Youth Hostel site in Killin, seven contemporary holiday chalets also in Killin at the Bridge of Lochay Hotel. In addition, significant Trunk Road infrastructure projects progressed in which the planning service had a significant influence through the National Park's consultation role in the relevant Road Orders – in particular a new cantilevered section of the A82 on Loch Lomondside at Pulpit Rock (north of Tarbet) and the Crianlarich by-pass.

The development at the former garage site in Killin has also finished and is now occupied providing 12 affordable housing units. Consents have recently been granted for affordable housing developments in Arrochar (Succoth – 26 units) and in Callander (Station Road – 23 units). As already referenced under 'Open for Business', small scale run-of-river hydro power continues to be a particular growth area within the Park. At the time of writing 12 schemes are under construction across the Park and are being monitored to ensure best practice in construction methods and environmental sensitivity. This work involves close collaboration with the landscape and ecology specialists in the Conservation team and our approach is highlighted in Project Focus – Implementation of Run-of-river hydro schemes.



- As a consequence of our experience in Hydro development, a Planning Officer from the National Park (together with our specialist advisor in ecology) have been involved in a 'task and finish' group with representatives of SEPA, SNH and the Heads of Planning (HoPs) to develop best practice for the construction industry in the preparation of Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMP). This is an area for further development and a future opportunity to share best practice with others.

- Apply **effective enforcement** to unauthorised development and monitoring of approved applications recognising that a visible enforcement deterrent is so important in order to maintain public confidence in the planning system and to ensure long term high quality development is delivered. We have found that, in the majority of cases any breach is not deliberate and voluntary resolution is effective. We, nevertheless, take enforcement action where informal liaison is unsuccessful and where it is expedient in the public interest. Our enforcement charter was reviewed, adopted and published in February 2014 and will be reviewed within 2015/2016 (in line with statutory requirements). The adopted Enforcement Charter follows the Scottish Government model and sets out our improved service standards and the criteria for High, Medium and Low Priority of enforcement investigations.

# Implementation of Run-of-river hydro schemes

Having attracted significant interest in the development of run-of-river hydro schemes in the National Park through the adoption of the Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Guidance produced in June 2013, the Development Management team continued to have pressure to move schemes quickly from pre-application through planning application to decision in order that developers achieve their desired Feed in Tariff (FiT) rate to ensure viability.

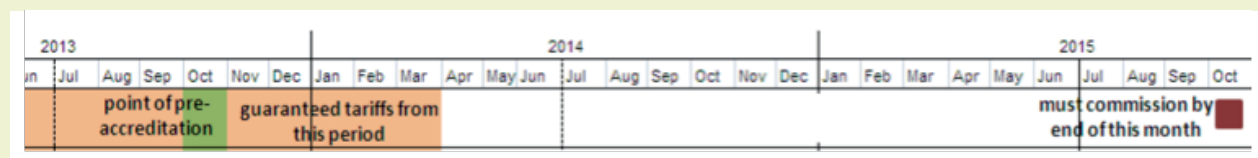
Further to the December 2013 deadline there was another 'wave' of applications seeking determination prior to December 2014 in order to achieve 'pre-accreditation' for FiT. Strategies to deal with this included weekly meetings with internal specialist advisers to prioritise applications. The amendment to the Scheme of Delegation resulted in five less applications having to go before the Planning and Access Committee as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) applications do not automatically require this, since changes in October 2013.



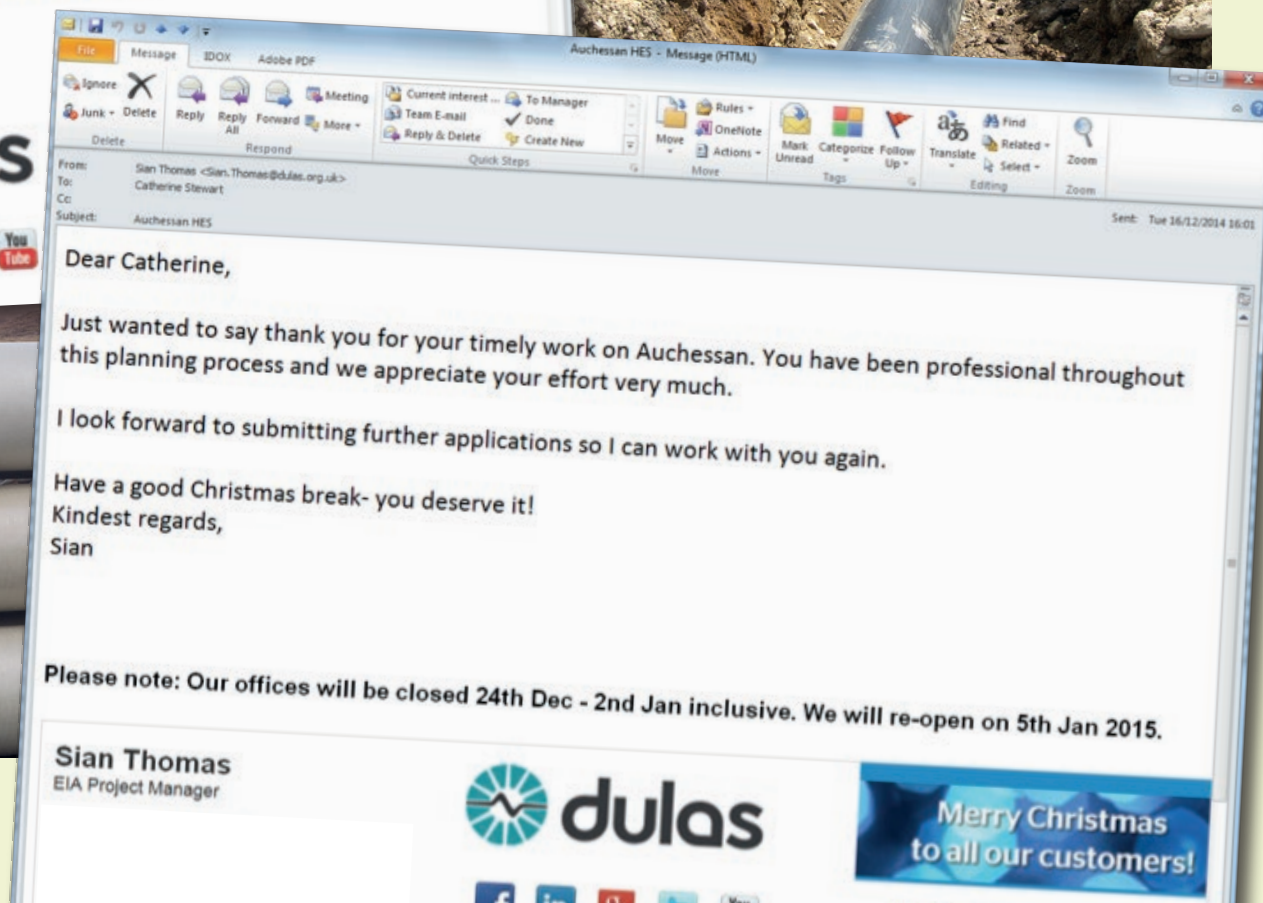
## Monitoring

Many of the schemes decided in 2013 are now in the process of being built. Pressure in terms of FiT continues as those schemes which achieved 'pre-accreditation' for a particular rate in 2013 have 2 years in which to complete construction and be operational – see graph below:

Monitoring of so many complex schemes in a sensitive landscape is a challenge. The Planning Monitoring Officer uses 'condition tracker' spreadsheets to monitor the discharge of conditions prior to site start. As required by conditions the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) and Landscape Clerk of Works (LCoW) reports are required to be submitted to the Planning Authority every month for the first six months and at regular intervals thereafter. Regular site visits are made, where possible with specialist advisers.









## Certainty

We ensure consistency of advice, process and decision-making to applicants by:

- Holding early engagement with National Park Board Members prior to Main Issues Report (17 Feb 2014) and Proposed Local Development Plan and Guidance (15 December 2014 and 16 & 30 March 2015) being considered at full board meetings. Maintaining an up to date Development Plan and Development Plan Scheme which sets out our programme to replace our Local Plan and how all parties can become engaged.



- By using project management methodology to prepare our Local Development Plan, which covers all stage of the project lifecycle, we have ensured key milestones are achieved. To ensure our approach remains effective, in April/May 2014 we took part in a pilot exercise ran by the Scottish Government looking at the benefits of project management in the preparation of Local Development Plans. This took the form of a review by a team of four members, made up of an external project management expert, an internal Head of Service, an external Development Plans Manager & an External Head of Service. Over two days the panel interviewed a series of stakeholders; National Park staff, partner organisation representatives & community organisation representatives, about their involvement in the plan preparation process and how they considered it had been managed. The review team subsequently prepared a report setting out recommendations to assist the National Park to achieve a successful plan, delivered in a timely, efficient and appropriate way proportionate to available resources. This report was overwhelmingly positive.
- Continuing our annual programme of development monitoring to ensure our policies are working. We published our Monitoring Statement in April in support of our Main Issues Report



- Continue to engage the services of West of Scotland Archaeology to provide advice on planning applications the Main Issues Report consultation and preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan.
- Operating our **pre-application advice service** (Refer 'Open for Business' section) with case logging to enable us to:
  - Achieve reliable cross referencing of advice issued for any specific site (through our mapped records database)
  - Ensure consistency of approach by officers – adopting a template based response letter with attachments / links to relevant guidance notes as appropriate (i.e. bat surveys / working near trees).
  - Early awareness for applicants on legal agreement through leaflets and advice.
  - Ensure the officer allocated the pre-application case is, wherever possible, the same officer who determines the application

- Establishing protocols. For PPF 3 we reported concluding a protocol and standard heads of agreement **with Stirling Council as one of our key underlying Housing Authorities**. This addressed the efficient handling of legal agreements connected to **developer contributions** in the form of commuted sums in lieu of on/off site affordable housing delivery. The essence of the agreement secures that commuted sums generated by development within the Stirling Council area of the Park will be returned to be spent on securing affordable housing within the same area. Work is programmed for the year ahead to agree appropriate protocols with the other three housing authorities that cover with National Park.
- Ensuring our planning guidance is up to date - draft revised and new Guidance across eight topics was prepared for our Board's approval in April 2015 for consultation.
- **Engaging proactively with Key Agencies** throughout the Development Plan process. We consulted key agencies for the Main Issues Report (April 2014), Additional Sites Report (November 2014) and in the preparation of the Proposed Local Development Plan (January to March 2015). During Main Issues Report (MIR) consultation we held open meetings with key agencies (May 2014) to brief them of the MIR and answer any questions they had.



- **Using Processing agreements** as a matter of course on Major and significant Local applications. We have also been using agreements in a simplified form on all of our applications as we believe the certainty for our customers is invaluable, however the effectiveness of these agreements remains a concern. Development work on defining solutions is a priority in order to target decision making timescales for local and householder applications for the coming year (Service Improvement No.2). The main focus for our team was to successfully communicate the closure of the National Park Authority during the Christmas Period (which is a first) and ensure agents/applicants were aware that decisions could not be issued during this time period in an attempt to agree an alternative timescale for processing their application. This proved to be an effective tool at this time and has given us a basis to develop our communication with our customers and implement a practical and clear process for all other and local applications.

For the year ahead we propose to prioritise service improvement work to the development of our procedures for the Monitoring Officer role with a particular focus on the efficient discharge of conditions. As part of this it is our intention to investigate extending our use of processing agreements to the implementation phase of development on our more complex schemes. This will give more certainty to developers on our timescales for discharging pre-start conditions to enable work to start on site.

The National Park Authority was one of the Authorities surveyed in the preparation of the Scottish Government department of Planning and Architecture report on the Benefits of using Processing Agreements published in April 2015 – as a means of **sharing best practice**.



## EIA applications

Since the National Park is a 'Sensitive Area' for the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2011 we have a fairly high proportion of EIA applications than for an equivalent sized authority. Any proposals which fall under Schedule 2 of the EIA regs require to be screened.

The National Park Authority has performed well with the determination of EIA applications, in a shorter time period than the Scottish average. Reasons for this include the procedures in place for dealing with screening and scoping, an amended scheme of delegation and the use of simplified processing agreements.

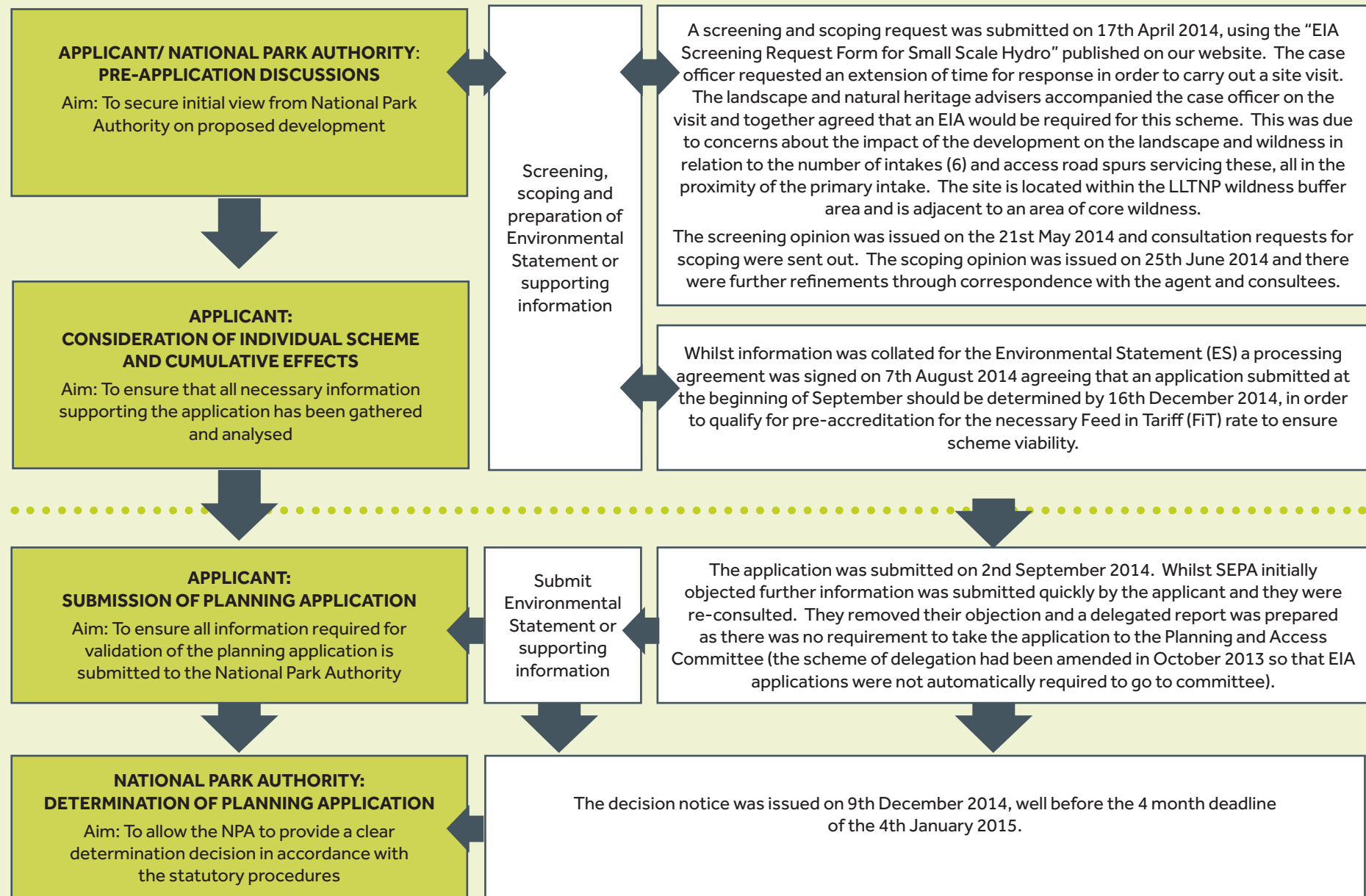
The **screening and scoping procedures** were put in place in 2013, including an explanatory guidance note for applicants. The procedures allow for a separate file to be set up to deal with screening and scoping requests, use of e-planning to carry out consultations and the facility to publish screening and scoping opinions on the public access website.

Many of the EIA applications are for renewable energy schemes and the **SPG on Renewable Energy** has also helped by including sections encouraging pre-application dialogue and early submission of screening and, where necessary, scoping requests.



## Case Study: Glean Casaig Hydro

The following flow chart illustrates the progress of E.I.A applications for a run-of-river hydro development through the relevant stages of screening and scoping, assembly of proportionate information with project management to application submission, assessment and decision.

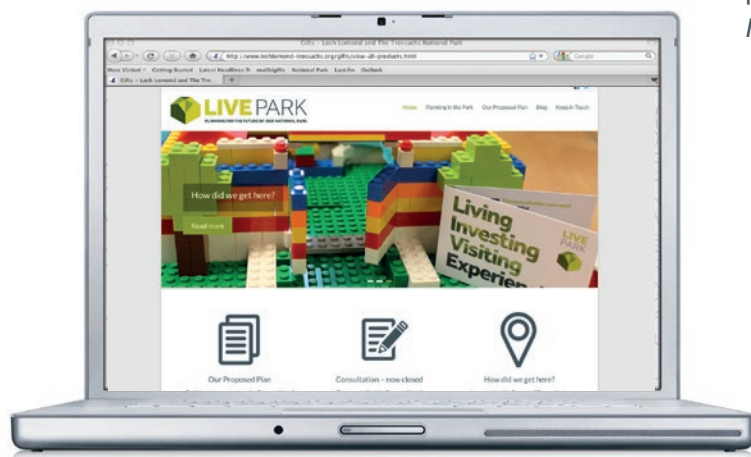


## Communication, engagement and customer service

Our communications strategy involves:

### Proactively encouraging applicants and agents to use e-Planning

- We promote the use of **e-Planning** particularly in our pre-application responses. This is reflected in the high number of online applications made. We also have around 70% of representations submitted electronically using either the online comments facility on our Public Access System or e-mail.
- **Issuing decision notices electronically** via e-mail to applicants or agents, providing an instant direct link to their application on our public access site. This lets them obtain their additional decision documentation (for example plans) electronically. We now find that we only issue paper decision notices and drawings once or twice a year, significantly reducing our environmental impact, costs and delays for applicants/agents.



### Having an up-to-date user friendly website(s)

- Provides information on our service and the planning process using our Advice leaflets. Providing direct contact details for our Planning Information Manager to assist with any queries (See **Culture of Continuous Improvement**)
- Consideration of options for broadening social media engagement more widely across the planning service; drawing from the experience of our Main Issues Report. (*Refer Service Improvements No.5, 6 & 7*).
- Provision of various methods for **payment of applications** and advert fees. As well as the online payment facility through OAA, we also provide a telephone card payment facility and we continue to accept cheques and cash payments. 2014/2015 will see the introduction of Paypal becoming an available method for payments on our web-site. (*Refer Service Improvement No.4*)
- The use of our **Public Access** site has increased significantly since last year with 102,710 searches conducted in 2013/2014 compared with 58,148 for the previous year. This positive trend confirms our dedication to providing an easy to use and accessible site.
- The creation of a bespoke modern website initially for the preparation of our Local Development Plan **ourlivepark.com but with the intention to also relate to the delivery and promotion of the Plan in the future**. This provided a continuous update of the various consultations including publication of our formal documents, our blog with videos explaining developments in different parts of the park and planning buzzwords. It also has a feeds to our bespoke **twitter** and **facebook** sites.
- Ourlivepark.com website was linked back to our **Online Local Development Plan (OLDP)** system which allowed people to make direct comments on the Main Issues Report and the Additional Sites Report consultations.
- Shared our experience of a multi-media Main Issues Report consultation at the RTPi's Annual Conference, the Improvement Service's Development Planning seminar on engagement and with TayPlan colleagues.



## Our commitment to providing the highest possible standard of service

- Meeting our **service standards** set in our Planning Service Charter is a key priority in our procedures and processes. We have had feedback for possible amendments to our standards, from within our own team and engagement with our Members from our Planning and Access Committee. It has been agreed that the current charter remains fit for purpose and progress on a full charter review has therefore been delayed for the time being to focus on other priorities.
- Having a **Planning Information Manager** who is the first point of contact for telephone calls and public reception enquiries. This post ensures cover for our dedicated Planning Telephone line and we endeavour to respond to messages left by the end of the working day or first thing the next day. Feedback shows that members of the public are grateful to speak with someone in the team rather than leaving voice messages.
- Our **pre-app service** together with our 'Making a valid planning application' advice leaflet has continued to secure a high level of applications valid on receipt with numbers for 2014/2015 at **78%**. With 20% of those invalid applications being for unpaid fees it is hoped that by the end of 2015/2016 and the introduction of the Paypal facility on our web-site we can negate the necessity to make these applications invalid. Our target is to reach and sustain over 80% of our applications valid on receipt.
- Making progress toward developing the most effective options for capturing **customer feedback** was a Service Improvement in 2013/14. Some progress was made through the identification of a member of the DM team to champion and lead the project and working in association with our relatively new resource of our Corporate Services 'campaigns manager' to identify the most effective options. A visit to Fife Council in February 2014 was a beneficial exercise in terms of sharing their best practice experience and developing our own ideas toward an agreed approach. This Commitment will be continued into 2015/2016 (Service Improvement No.8).
- We carried out extensive **youth engagement** with local primary and secondary schools associated with the National Park (May-June 2014). We worked with Planning Aid for Scotland and Emily Dodd to express the planning points raised in the Main Issues Report and to get the feedback from the youth of the Park (primary and secondary schools). This is all set out in our youth engagement report which was presented to our Board (September 2014). In 2015 we prepared for continued engagement with some of our secondary schools.



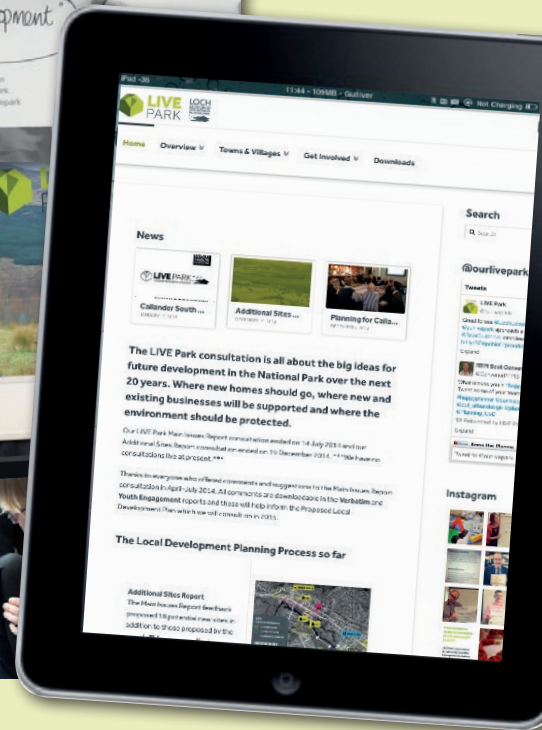
- The Forward Planning Team organised and attended numerous **community events**, drop-ins and meetings as well as attended the Royal Highland Show (Edinburgh), Drymen Show and Callander Gala event in which we had our own stall for the Main Issues Report. We were able to discuss the big ideas for future development in the Park with local residents and tourists we wouldn't normally get the opportunity to talk to. People were able to ask us questions and were able to fill out copies of the representation form at these events or take them home to post in later.

## LIVE Park

Preparation for the consultation on our Proposed Local Development Plan this year follows on from our campaign-led approach to engagement which was adopted during last years' two consultations on Main Issues Report and the follow up Additional Sites Report.

We have continued our multi-media approach to communicate progress as we draft the policies and proposals for the future development in the National Park over the next 20 years. We also held further interactive workshops in Callander and in Buchanan South to help flesh out draft planning guidance for these areas.

As highlighted last year, the investment of significant time and resources in engagement at each stage in the process through our programme of charrette events, workshops and drop-in events, has delivered several demonstrable benefits, most notably more engaged and informed communities, fewer responses when compared to the past Local Plan consultation and a smaller number of contentious issues or sites.



## Efficient and Effective Decision-Making

We ensure our structures and processes are proportionate by having:



- An **effective Scheme of Delegation** enabling simplification and prioritisation of more complex casework to committee – and clarity for Members. Delegated decisions involve electronic signing of reports of handling and final decision notices checked by officers to reduce delays. Through previous PPF reports we have highlighted our regular review and update of our scheme of delegation. In November 2014 we reviewed and updated the Scheme of Delegation in light of legislation changes to ensure it is fit for purpose. (*Refer SI13 from PPF3 - successfully completed*). This year (as with the previous reporting period) only 5% of all applications were decided at Committee which reduces delays.
- Scheduled **monthly committee meetings** with flexible additional meetings as and when required for high pressure periods.
- Appropriate **staff training** - in November 2014 a joint training session designed to improve report writing skills was undertaken. This was organised by the National Park but places were offered to Planning staff from neighbouring authorities (Argyll and Bute Council and West Dunbartonshire Council) and this helped offset the cost as well as provide improved opportunity for sharing best practice. It was led by an experienced planning practitioner from Trevor Roberts. Subsequently delegated report templates have been reviewed and good practice review meetings have helped roll out 'summary skills' within the DM team. Significant time savings in the preparation of delegated reports are anticipated to be realised here.  
  
Throughout the period staff also attended a range of seminars or events – rural housing, development planning, building conservation techniques – and participated in the HOPS Development Management Forum.
- **Comprehensive training to members** of our planning committee to facilitate understanding of planning policy and enable **quality decision making** at Committee. In particular, regular sessions were held with the Full Board and Planning Committee Members through the evolution of the Main Issues Report and the Draft Local Development Plan. We also provided induction training for a number of new Members in the reporting period. For the reporting period only two applications were approved contrary to development plan. No officer's committee recommendations were overturned at Committee.



- A **close working relationship** was continued with partners (SEPA, SNH). With our growing experience in processing applications for 'run of river' hydro schemes we have encouraged applicant's to apply for their water use licence (CAR licence) and Planning Permission in parallel so that any obstacles can be overcome simultaneously. – Project Focus - Implementation of Run-of-river hydro schemes. Our 2014 SPG on renewables reinforces this approach by actively encouraging developers to submit applications for CARS and planning Permission together, as does our pre-application advice. We continue to seek inroads toward developing better integrated working between planning consent work and SEPA CAR licensing and in April 2015 SEPA representatives made a presentation to Members of our Planning Committee to assist understanding of the allocation of responsibilities between the two Authorities.
- Constant review and update of procedures. We are looking to introduce a new procedure for processing Non Material Variation requests; we will produce a short delegated report in addition to a Decision Letter and it is intended that this provides more transparency in our decision making. To aid efficiency in processing our NMV requests we have already introduced within the reporting period an application form that gives guidance on the process and aims to improve the quality and clarity of the submission therefore cutting down on unnecessary time spent querying details with agents.
- **Service agreements** and protocols with SNH and SEPA, 2 of our key statutory consultees. In the reporting period the protocol with SNH was jointly reviewed and updated. It was our expressed intention in PPF3 to prepare a protocol with the underlying Local Authority flood advisors acknowledging changes in responsibilities as a consequence of the Water Framework Directive. (*Refer Service Improvement 15 of PPF3*) A formal protocol has not been concluded, however discussions have been on-going with the flood teams of individual authorities and consistent advice is being provided.
- **A working agreement with our own internal specialist advisors** to better prioritise consultation responses and to clarify, simplify and streamline the exchange of information. This was first proposed as a *Service Improvement Commitment* in PPF2. This project progressed through 2014/15 with the establishment of a project team and a project plan. The work focuses on three areas: Policy, procedure and instructions. A policy was agreed with the National Park Executive team in Jan 2015 which sets key principles on responsibilities and controls for the publicity of internal consultation responses. The project remains a SI commitment for the year ahead in order to further progress the procedure and best practice detail (*Refer Service Improvement No.3*)
- Processing agreements as a matter of course on Major and significant Local Applications – as a service improvement for the year ahead our approach to the use of processing agreements will be published on our website and an advice leaflet will be prepared (*Refer Service Improvement No.2*).
- Proactive engagement with agents when time periods are approaching that may delay the issue of a decision. For example we issued a mailshot to highlight the closure of the NP offices over the Christmas /New Year period.
- A review of our approach to 'legacy' cases. Although a number of legacy cases remained outstanding for the reporting period – see part 1 NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS – a significant number (11) were also cleared for the period. Our work on legal agreements under PPF3 has significantly reduced issues with prolonged legal agreements but there remains work to be done on other cases – particularly those related to enforcement interventions. Service Improvement No.1 is proposed for the coming year to develop a strategy to address this issue and it is anticipated it will focus around a programme of 'persuasion to withdraw' followed by the option to 'revisit for refusal'.

## Built Heritage Repair Grant (BHRG)

We recognise the significant contribution that the built heritage makes to the special character of the National Park and that its repair and restoration should be encouraged. While many traditional properties are well maintained, sometimes the use of unsympathetic materials erodes their original character.

There are also many properties which are in need of repair and restoration, ranging from replacement of slate roofs to the repair of sash and case windows, property boundaries and traditional signage. Building on the success of Historic Scotland's completed Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes in Callander and Killin, the Park's Built Heritage Repair Grant was launched in 2013.

### **An annual fund of £20k was established to:**

- Encourage owners to repair/sympathetically restore traditional properties, securing their long-term future, and ensuring that they continue to make a positive contribution to the character of the National Park
- Ensure that traditional building methods and skills using traditional materials, are not lost
- Reduce our carbon footprint by maintaining our built heritage

To qualify for grant, the properties had to date from before 1919, be visible from main routes through the Park, and be relatively unaltered.

### **We have now successfully completed the second year (2014/15) of the BHRG delivering:**

- 7 repair and restoration projects
- 1 on-going project due to unforeseen issues with the condition of chimney on a listed building.
- Match funding to the Luss Hogback Stone (scheduled monument) project which includes restoration, interpretation and volunteer training.

The successful projects included repairs to listed buildings, un-listed, traditional buildings and properties in conservation areas.



## Effective Management Structures

We ensure we have management structures that are fit for purpose by:

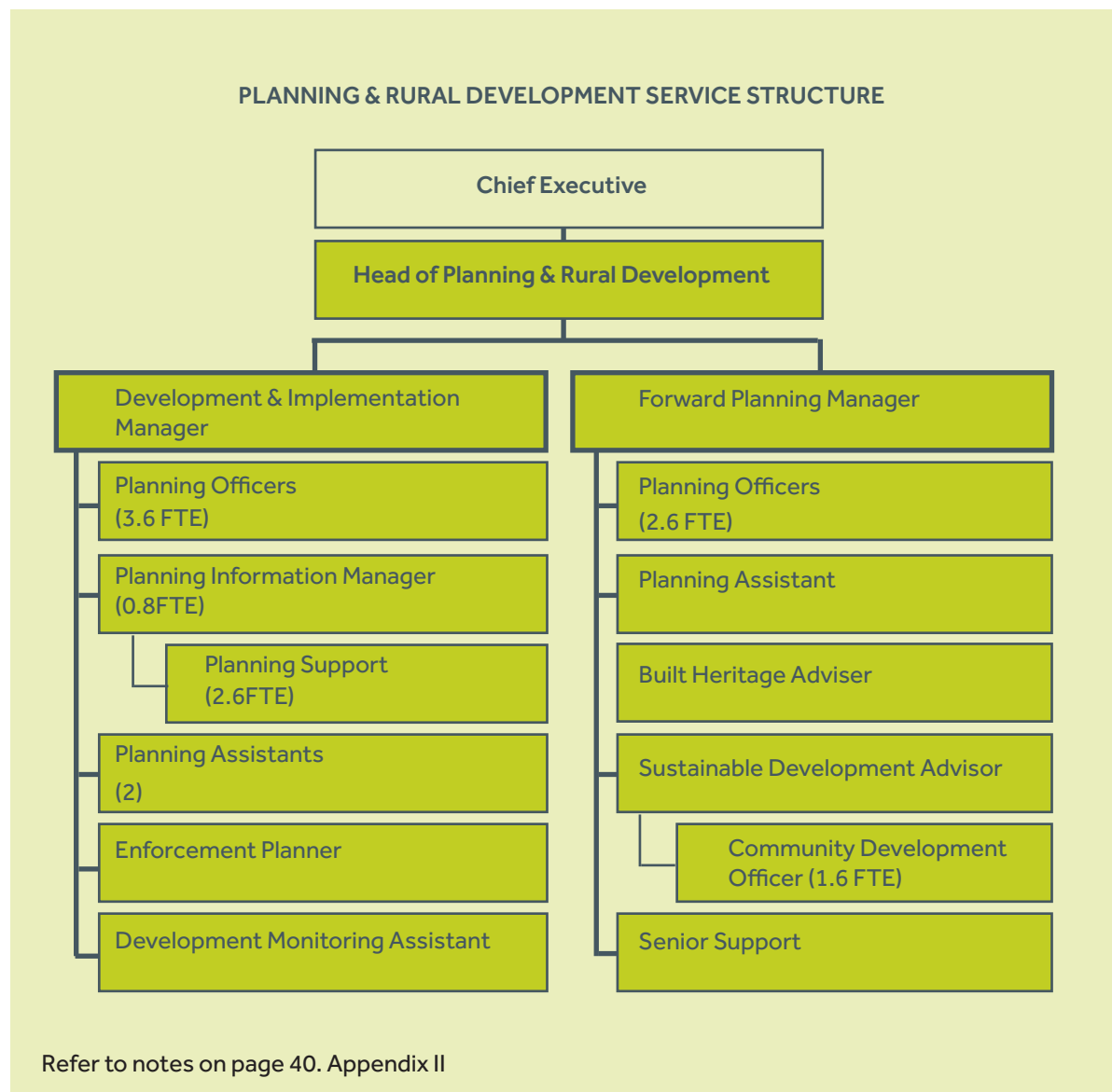
- Working within a clearly defined corporate management structure – with an overarching Annual Operational Plan that aligns with our Corporate Plan and current National Park Partnership Plan.
- Preparing and taking leadership of the delivering of the relevant outcome for Rural Development in our **National Park Partnership Plan** which ensures joint objectives with all the other public sector partners\* operating in the National Park Area.
- Having a strong **collaborative relationship** with our colleagues in our Conservation Team who regularly give advice and support on biodiversity, landscape, trees and built heritage. Weekly prioritisation meetings are held to help develop a 'one team' dynamic and improve communication.  
  
Service Improvement commitment No.3 remains to ensure improved priority planning and simplify and streamline the exchange of information between the teams (Refer Efficient and Effective Decision Making above).
- Having **strong connections with our Cairngorms National Park colleagues**. With the shared resource of the LLTNP GIS team we have consistently provided Cairngorms DM with our procedures, processes and templates to assist with their development of their application processes and system set-up. Staff from Cairngorms have visited our offices on many occasions and have met with members of our Development Management staff to discuss different issues and receive mentoring on the IDOX EDRMS and Uniform system operations and attend joint training events. There have been a number of secondments of staff across both National Parks.
- Having **regular team meetings** within Development Management and Forward Planning held together by Rural Development managers' meetings where projects and service priorities are discussed and agreed. Also, resources are regularly reviewed to ensure delivery of agreed service plan and corporate priorities.
- Increasingly applying a **flexible approach to staffing** in response to workload – for example in February the retention of a second planning assistant (who had been on a short term contract) was confirmed as providing the most effective team structure to ensure efficiency on the quick turnaround / householder casework. During July and through September we employed a paid planning 'intern' who gained work experience and helped with a range of tasks. An additional part time planner also joined the Forward Planning team to assist with the preparation of the Proposed Plan and some external consultancy support was also brought in to support landscape assessment and community engagement peaks in this project.



- We **provide staff opportunities** to move between Development Management and Forward Planning team and Enforcement is given support when required. This ensures workload pressures are met either to deal with a Local Development Plan deadline or large volumes of planning applications. This **fluid/flexible approach** means we are best positioned to react to demand pressures not just within our own teams but across the department as a whole and has been particularly important during the period of the LDP preparation, programming and publicity.
- Ensuring we have staff with a **range of skills and expertise** who are capable of working on a variety of projects and picking out appropriate training opportunities within our limited training budget to ensure we build the skills to meet future needs. Notably a Development Management Officer benefitted from the Planning Skills workshop 'Minerals Planning – Exchanging Good Practice', on 24 March 2015.

\*Key Public Sector Partners include:

West Dunbartonshire Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Stirling Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Forestry Commission, SNH, Police, Transport Scotland, Sport Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Historic Scotland, SEPA and Visit Scotland.



## Financial Management and Local Governance

### Our Planning & Rural Development service:

- Operates within strictly defined levels of financial delegated authority for signing off the purchase of goods and services within a **robust procurement strategy**.
- Uses regular **financial and business planning reports** to ensure effective management checks are in place and these are provided to staff, management, the Board and Scottish Government.
- Aims to **recover legal fees** in association with the preparation, modification or discharge of planning obligations.
- Provide quarterly updates on performance against our Annual Operational Plan along with a specific report on the preparation of our new Local Development Plan as one of our 'higher' risk projects to our Delivery Group. This is made up of 6 of our Board Members who take oversight of delivery of the business against key performance indicators in the areas of delivery of NPA objectives, financial performance and staff resource management. This Group in turn reports to our Audit Committee.
- Follows **internal policies, processes and procedures** to ensure best practice and statutory guidelines are considered and followed. These are continually being updated as required. During the year there has been an update of relevant Health & Safety risk assessments, including for site visits.
- An **all-staff workforce survey** was undertaken in September 2014 (organisation wide) to support our Corporate Plan outcome to have 'engaged, high performing and empowered staff'. This was the second employee engagement survey undertaken under the 'Best Companies' programme the first having been undertaken in September 2013. Following analysis of the results one year ago, a range of measures have been rolled out covering leadership, personal growth, well-being and team building. The re-survey results provided a great opportunity to assess the effectiveness of these measures. A very positive result was achieved overall with improved scores in almost all areas and an overall recorded increase of 7% in employee satisfaction from the previous year. It was confirmed that the National Park has improved its standing to a position within the 'top 100 not-for-profit organisations to work for in the UK'. For this Service in particular the programme has delivered: more robust team meetings, a consistent approach to one-to-ones and a better structured staff training programme. The preparation of 'team plans' has been extremely useful for the Service in clarifying the range of service improvement tasks – with better defined responsibility for actions and timescales.



## Culture of Continuous Improvement

- The National Park has consistently engaged in planning service improvement delivery - despite not having a dedicated staff resource to this area. All initiatives are undertaken by professional and support staff under the direction of the planning managers. Engagement across the organisation is secured wherever possible - including the Communications Team (Refer: Project Focus - LIVE PARK) and our specialist advisors.
- Our **Development Management Procedure Manual** covers everything from planning applications, to non-material amendments, EIAs and pre-applications. The team work hard to ensure processes and procedures are efficient and effective, all suggestions for changes or concerns from customers and colleagues are assessed and appropriate action is taken where required to improve the process. It was programmed as a SI commitment in PPF2 to commence a review of the manual. Good progress is being made with our new format and it remains a substantial on-going task. An appraisal of the existing procedure manual is reflected in the specific project work/service improvement commitments (for example Prior Notifications) undertaken throughout the year. Rather than continue to include the entire review of the manual as an on-going target we are focusing on specific realistic priority areas requiring improvements for each PPF period.
- Although not put forward in PPF3 as a specific Service Improvement action area, through the course of the reporting period new procedures were formalised for the consideration of applications for works to trees within TPOs, within Conservation Areas or those with restrictions imposed by a Planning Condition. This work was essential to commence registering Tree Works applications within our Uniform system, recording the documentation within our EDRMS system and the publication of these applications within our Online Planning Information System and on our Weekly List.
- Awareness of the review of the Prior Notification and Prior Approval process relative to private ways led us to undertake works to improve our procedures and processes for these types of applications. This work has been of great benefit to our staff and our customers in clarifying the process and providing information on what happens next. Given the substantial increase in numbers of this type of application (almost 200%) from just 6 for 2013/2014 to 17 in total for 2014/2015 (12 of which were received in Q4 2014/2015 alone) it was deemed necessary to prioritise this area of work above some of our promised Service Improvement commitments.
- A suite of Draft Supplementary Guidance (statutory) and Planning Guidance (non-statutory) accompanying the Proposed Local Development Plan were developed internally over the year and published in May 2015 for consultation – the work substantially complete during the reporting year. The list of guidance is highlighted in the table below and they provide additional planning information in relation to specific topics in the Proposed Plan.

Draft Supplementary Guidance	Draft Planning Guidance
Housing	Callander South Masterplan Framework
Design and Placemaking	Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas
West Loch Lomond Rural Development Framework	Developer Contributions
Buchanan South Rural Development Framework	Visitor Experience

These documents are available to download from [www.ourlivepark.com](http://www.ourlivepark.com)



- As a current example of on-going work on advice notes, we have now published our EIA Planning **Advice Leaflet**. We believe our Advice Leaflets are an invaluable resource for our applicants/agents when preparing their proposals, and we frequently provide them as supplements to our Pre-application Advice. It is our intention to maintain our dedication to the provision of clear and informative guidance on all aspects of our service and this will continue to have a positive impact on the quality of applications received.
- Our attention to delivering and refining **Online Planning Information** and streamlining our electronic procedures is a key efficiency. This results in fewer telephone calls and enquiries thus saving time and money across all parts of the process from consultations to report writing. Our attention to detail with the receipt and publication of representations on applications is of great benefit to members of the public during the processing of applications and the high volume of publicly available information on our public access is appreciated. In light of the Records Management work the National Park Authority is undertaking as part of the Public Records Act, and the imminent introduction of a new retention schedule, members of the team have invested time in the clarification of our document naming conventions to further improve our service ensuring consistency and clarity.
- Our on-going programme of **Member training and development** continues to improve Members' knowledge of key planning issues and results in better informed decision making. During 2014 our programme included an update study tour focused upon the Scottish Government initiative on 'Scenic Routes' which continued to be rolled out in the National Park over the review period. LRB procedure and best practice updates were given by our legal advisor at each meeting of the LRB. Our LRB under the revised standing orders will consist of all members of the planning & access committee instead of the current panel system. We re-affirm our commitment to this objective as training will be required for these new members of the LRB in the coming year.
- Officer training has also been on-going – see reference to report writing skills in 'Efficient and effective decision making'. Individual officers have also attended training on 'Low Carbon Scotland', 'Sustainable Buildings', 'Community Growing, temporary greening and stalled spaces', 'Repairing chimneys' and 'Environmental Auditing' providing feedback to the rest of the team at team meetings.
- We share GIS services with Cairngorms National Park Authority. We continually provide Cairngorms with best practice advice, procedures and templates. Some work undertaken this year had been the provision of Decision Notice templates, and Neighbour Notification procedures/templates. Discussions are currently underway to enable Cairngorms to deal with pre-application enquiries, contributors and their use of the Enforcement module. There is also a plan to set up a Joint PTWG (Planning Technical Working Group) that we both currently have individually with our GIS team but hope that this shared group will allow us to work jointly on upcoming projects/ system updates in the future.
- We have had 2 visits to Fife Council, one to discuss their work on obtaining customer feedback which then led to a further visit with the Planning Support team to visit their Gateway Team. The time spent with the Gateway Team provided us with confidence in some of our own practices and ideas for future improvements when handling applications. One improvement in particular was cost saving by dealing with the Edinburgh Gazette directly rather than through our advertising agency. Work is underway to implement this in 2015/2016.

# Part 3

## Supporting Evidence

In order to compile Part 2 above we have drawn on the following documents:

### ➤ **Planning Service Charter**

Planning Service Charter      [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/images/stories/Planning/PDF/Planning%20\\_Service\\_Charter\\_Jan2012.pdf](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/images/stories/Planning/PDF/Planning%20_Service_Charter_Jan2012.pdf)

### ➤ **Enforcement Charter**

Enforcement Charter      [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/images/stories/Planning/PDF/Advice%20notes/Enforcement%20Charter%202014.pdf](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/images/stories/Planning/PDF/Advice%20notes/Enforcement%20Charter%202014.pdf)

### ➤ **Built Heritage Repair Grant Scheme**

Built Heritage Repair Grant Scheme      [www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/built-heritage-repair-grant/menu-id-963.html](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/built-heritage-repair-grant/menu-id-963.html)

### ➤ **LIVE Park**

LIVE Park Website:      <http://www.ourlivepark.com>  
LIVE Park on Facebook      <https://www.facebook.com/ourLIVEpark>  
LIVE Park on Twitter      <https://twitter.com/ourlivepark>

### ➤ **LIVE Park Planning Videos for Main Issues Report stage**

Arrochar      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ELRSeXSuVo>  
Callander      [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0t\\_arlGENs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0t_arlGENs)  
Buzzword – Planning      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqgYXL2bXxc>  
Buzzword – Infrastructure      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gban2HVRRIE>  
Buzzword – Sustainable Development      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlizhBSSqTw>  
Buzzword – Charette      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZXZdJYucyc>  
Buzzword – Conservation Area      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahhcznr0rI>  
Buzzword – Affordable Housing      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwzvazWpx4k>  
Buzzword – Development      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mUApcQtLkU>  
Buzzword – Masterplan      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4VcSey3Ngc>  
Youth Engagement - What's in it for young people?      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofiqe8ZML7w>

# Part 4

## Service Improvements

**In the coming year we will:**

**Continue to improve operational systems, processes and casework management:**

*Previous Service Improvement targets from PPF3 which are not fully completed will be progressed as detailed on the following pages. Our reviewed focus areas for the year ahead are:*

1. Review legacy cases, formulate an action plan to reduce the number of outstanding cases.
2. Target improved decision making timescales for local and householder applications  
*Through flexible use of staff resource, improved awareness of target dates, a more effective use of processing agreements and simplified delegated reports.*
3. Implement our updated procedure to secure best practice with our internal specialist advisors on planning consultations.
4. Facilitate an online payment option on our web-site

**Identify opportunities to improve communication and accessibility of planning:**

*Building on LIVE Park experience, identify short, medium and longer term changes that can be achieved to improve understanding, awareness and engagement in planning information and decisions*

5. Establish a social media presence for communicating basic Development Management information  
*Promote committee meetings, papers, weekly lists and more significant planning decisions*
6. Expand the use of the LIVE Park 'brand' and digital presence to relate to all our planning activities  
*Update content to reflect the stage in our Proposed Plan, and broaden out content to relate to development management, enforcement, community development and built environment. Could include basic information and/or a small number of 'blogs' by staff undertaking these duties*
7. Identify and deliver early actions on continuing to develop our liaison and engagement with our key audiences and customers  
*Hold forum meeting with planning agents, plan out and start promotion with key development sectors on delivery of the Local Development Plan, target presentation or briefing events, formulate marketing approach for visitor accommodation investment opportunities in the Trossachs*
8. Conclude our approach to obtaining Development Management customer feedback  
*Undertake a survey and analyse the results.*



## Our delivery of service improvement actions from previous year

SI 1	<b>Consider options to improve awareness, understanding and engagement in planning – including through social media – by drawing on experience of our Main Issues Report consultation.</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
	<p>We have used a campaign led social media approach in addition to the traditional methods of engagement for the Local Development Plan consultations including a bespoke website, facebook and twitter pages. We have evidence which shows the effectiveness of this approach which reaches a wider audience than would normally be the case. An example being a young couple attending a drop in event after reading about it on facebook. We aim to continue this approach for future consultations.</p> <p>Facebook and twitter were used to promote our Main Issues Report (2014), Additional Sites Report (2014) and Proposed Local Development Plan (May 2015) consultations along with events held to prepare the Proposed Plan under the ourlivepark.com branding.. Numerous blogs were published on the website and posts were used to promote the consultations progress via facebook and twitter. For the Main Issues Report stage we produced YouTube LIVE Park videos for the two towns where the focus of future development growth will take place: Arrochar and Callander. We also produced LIVE Park videos which demystified planning buzzwords such as Sustainable Development, Infrastructure and Charette.</p>	
SI 2	<b>Continue to improve the understanding and participation within hard to reach groups, particularly young people and working age families. This will include an on-going programme with secondary schools as well as opportunities for work placements by students or graduates.</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
	<p>As outlined above and earlier, we implemented the approach during the period aswell as applying our learning's in further engagement in October and November in two areas of the Park. Preparation was undertaken for the Proposed Plan consultation which included working with secondary schools and we provided an opportunity for a planning 'intern' during the summer period who assisted with a range of tasks. Following their placement with us they gained a permanent role within another planning authority.</p>	
SI 3	<b>Continue the Rural Housing Enabler project to maintain support for our communities and landowners to increase the range of affordable housing. This project provides viability advice to landowners, advice on access to funding sources for meeting affordable housing requirements as well as assisting planning staff ensure there is a housing land supply over the medium to longer term.</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
	<p>The Rural Housing Enabler project is now complete. Outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of sites that can be developed through 2013-2015 or taken forward into 2015-2020 in the new LDP</li> <li>Formed relationships and firm contacts with landowners/developers. Provide information to enable sites/areas to be included in Local Authorities Strategic Housing Investment Plans.</li> <li>Discussions with LLTNPA in relation to information gathered that can be reflected in future planning and housing policy.</li> </ul>	
SI 4	<b>Continue the Built Heritage Repair Grant Scheme - providing grant support for the repair and restoration of traditional buildings across the Park.</b>	<b>ON-GOING</b>
	<p>A new built heritage repair grant scheme is to be launched at the start of the new financial year and will be reported on as part of the next PPF. This has become core work and therefore will no longer feature as a service improvement for the year ahead. Refer Project Focus on Built Heritage Repair Grant Scheme</p>	

SI 5	<b>Publish Conservation Area Management Plans for Killin and Callander Conservation Areas to ensure that these areas are properly protected by providing guidance in the determination of planning and listed building applications affecting the conservation areas</b>	PART COMPLETED
	The Area Management Plans have not been published. However, Listed Building and Conservation Area planning guidance has been prepared and published as part of the Proposed Plan consultation. It therefore provides sufficient guidance to determine planning and listed building application affecting conservation areas.	
SI 6	<b>Review our Scheme of Delegation</b>	COMPLETED
	The Scheme of Delegation was comprehensively reviewed against recent legislative updates. Considered by the Full Board in October 2014 and subsequently confirmed by Scottish Government	
SI 7	<b>Prepare and implement a service agreement with our internal specialist advisors.</b>	PART COMPLETED
	A paper outlining the policy for handling internal consultations was agreed by Executive officers in January 2015. This was a key step in the process giving clarity to responsibilities for publicity of information. The project continues for the year ahead to develop template responses and best practice in terms of written content.	
SI 8	<b>Devise an approach to obtain customer service feedback</b>	PART COMPLETED
	Good progress has been made with investigations of shared practice through the HoPs network and a Visit to Fife Council to review their recent experience. Continues as a Service Improvement target for the year ahead.	
SI 9	<b>Develop a mechanism to monitor the quality of developments recording the added value with a focus on conservation gains</b>	NOT COMPLETED
	Not progressed due to the demand on the lead officer's time on planning application casework. It has been decided to simply record basic added value information in Uniform at this time.	
SI 10	<b>Finalisation and implementation of new EIA Screening &amp; Scoping Process and procedures.</b>	COMPLETED
	Achieved – refer to Project Focus on EIA applications. This project has an important contribution towards ensuring proportionate requests for information.	
SI 11	<b>Implement new procedure and process for dealing with Planning Obligations</b>	COMPLETED
	Procedure has been agreed for changes with our external legal advisors and a policy for return of delayed applications subject to S75 to Committee for reconsideration within 6 months. This improved process should contribute to our action plan for legacy cases.	

SI 12	<b>Facilitate additional online payment option on web-site</b>	NOT COMPLETED
	Delayed as a result of Corporate decisions on website priority work. Re-programmed for the year ahead and achievable.	
SI 13	<b>Refine templates for Delegated and Committee reports</b>	PART COMPLETED
	A report writing training day was held (National Park organised and externally delivered). This gave good initial imputes to change and staff have been learning from good practice on how to better summarise assessments. Subsequent team focus groups have made significant progress toward refining the templates which will assist with achieving improved decision making timescales.	
SI 14	<b>Progress affordable housing commuted sums protocol with Argyll &amp; Bute Council</b>	PART COMPLETED
	An intense LDP programme has not allowed dedicated officer time through the PPF 4 reporting period. However, the established knowledge base from the Stirling Council protocol (achieved under PPF2) has set the ground rules and the LDP has evolved policy on developer contributions.	
SI 15	<b>Develop working relationships with Local Authority Flooding Advisors with a view to preparing a service agreement</b>	PART COMPLETED
	A series of meetings and discussions relative to the new Water Framework Directive has confirmed effective relationships with the underlying Council flood advisor teams. A formal Service Agreement has not been concluded.	
SI 16	<b>Implement LRB training for members following the survey and agreed action plan</b>	PART COMPLETED
	On-going training has been provided by the National Park's external legal advisor at each meeting. Co-ordinated training has been delayed by significant change in the Board /Committee membership. A new programme specifically for LRB is set for the year ahead	
SI 17	<b>Review procedures for processing agreements to reduce targets not being met</b>	PART COMPLETED
	A notable improvement for the % of applications subject to agreements which were concluded on time for Q4 2014/15. This was achieved through ongoing officer awareness and skills development. This is encouraging but the overall % remains low and work in this area remains a priority for targeting decision making timescales.	



## Appendix 1 - Official Statistics

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Without Legal Agreement	0	-	
With Legal Agreement	1	13.1	
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
<b>All Major Developments</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13.1</b>	
Minerals	1	13.1	
Housing	0	-	
Business and Industry	0	-	
Waste Management	0	-	
Electricity Generation	0	-	
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-	
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-	
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-	
Other Developments	0	-	
LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Without Legal Agreement	191	11.2	
With Legal Agreement	2	115.8	
LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	Proportion of Decision
<b>All Local Developments</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>12.2</b>	
Local: Less than 2 months	<b>109</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>56.5%</b>
Local: More than 2 months	<b>84</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>43.5%</b>
<b>Local Developments (non-householder)</b>	124	14.3	
Local: Less than 2 months	61	7.5	49.2%
Local: More than 2 months	63	20.9	50.8%
<b>Householder Developments</b>	69	8.6	
Local: Less than 2 months	48	7.1	69.6%
Local: More than 2 months	21	12.0	30.4%
<b>Housing</b>	34	21.5	
Local: Less than 2 months	11	7.8	32.4%
Local: More than 2 months	23	28.0	67.6%
<b>Business &amp; Industry</b>	8	9.0	
Local: Less than 2 months	5	8.2	62.5%
Local: More than 2 months	3	10.3	37.5%

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	% Under 2 months
Minerals	0	-	-
Waste Management	0	-	-
Electricity Generation	6	10.3	66.7%
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-	-
Other Developments	70	12.3	51.4%
Telecommunications	6	8.0	83.3%
AMSCs (under 2 months)	0	-	-

OTHER CONSENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Listed buildings & conservation area consents	35	12.8
Advertisements	9	7.9
Hazardous substances consents	0	-
Other consents and certificates	17	10.4

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Local Developments Subject To EIA	3	14.0
AMSCs (Subject to EIA)	0	-

APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Planning/Legal Agreement	3	81.6
Local Review	4	14.1

PROCESSING AGREEMENTS	Total number of decisions	% within agreed timescales
<b>All Processing Agreements</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48.8%</b>
Major applications	0	-
Local Applications	35	48.6%
EIA developments	2	0.0%
Other consents	6	66.7%

APPLICATIONS APPROVED / DELEGATED	Percentage	
Percentage of Applications Approved	97.5%	
Percentage of Applications Delegated	95.0%	

LOCAL REVIEWS and APPEALS	Total number of decisions	Original decision
Local Review	4	25.0%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	2	100.0%

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY	Number	
Cases Taken Up	15	
Notices Served	0	
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	
Prosecutions	0	
Number of breaches resolved	10	



## Appendix II - Workforce and Financial Information

This is a snapshot of staffing at 31 March 2014.

Tier				
Head of Planning Service (1)	1	2	3	4
	1 Chief Executive	0	1 Head of Service (vacant July – November)	2 Team Managers (FP Manager Vacant since November)

	Managers (2)		Main Grade Posts		Technician Posts		Office support/ Clerical		Totals
	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	
Development Management	1		3.6		2.8		2.6		
Forward Planning		1	2.6		1		1		
Enforcement Staff			1		1				
Cross Service/Other Planning			1						

Staffing profile	Number
Under 30	1
30-39	5
40-49	8
50 and Over	5

Committees & site visits (3)	No. per year
Full Council committees	1
Planning Committees	8
Area Committees (where relevant)	
Committee site visits	2
LRB (4)	5
LRB site visits	1

Actual Costs Planning Service	Costs		Income (7)
	Direct (5)	Indirect (6)	
Development Management & Enforcement Team	Staff £349,854	Unable to compile this information at this time	£292,261
Forward Planning Team	Staff £126,845		

## Notes on Workforce and Financial Information - refer to staffing diagram on page 27.

1. In relation to service structure, 1st tier post holders are Chief Executives, 2nd tier are Directors, 3rd tier are Heads of service and 4th tier are managers.
2. Managers are those people who are responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.
3. References to committees also include National Park Boards. Number of site visits are those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.
4. This related to the number of meetings of the LRB, application numbers going to LRB are reported elsewhere.
5. Direct staff costs covers gross pay, including overtime, national insurance and the superannuation contribution. The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority concerned spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs irrespective of what department they are allocated to. (For example: Legal advice, Administration; Typing) Exclude staff costs spending less than 30% of their time on planning.
6. Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to determining planning applications. Examples (not exhaustive) are:
  - Accommodation
  - Computing Costs
  - Stationery
  - Office machinery/Equipment
  - Telephone charges
  - Print
  - Advertising
  - T&S
  - Committees
  - Elected Members' expenses
  - The relevant apportionment of Support Service costs
7. Income - include planning fees for applications and deemed applications. (exclude income from property and planning searches)



**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs  
National Park Authority**

National Park Headquarters  
Carrochan Road  
Balloch  
G83 8EG

 **01389 722600**

**Published by:**  
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs  
National Park Authority

**JULY 2015**

