Planning Performance Framework

LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

2020 - 2021

Contents

Introduction

This is our tenth annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF10) for the National Park.

Published annually, this framework demonstrates the continuous improvement of our planning service and is a requirement for all planning authorities in Scotland. It represents a holistic view of our performance, giving substance to our statistics published bi-annually regarding how many applications we handled and the timescales for these.

This has been a challenging year and the Framework highlights the commitment of our staff to continue to deliver new improvements, albeit not the ones we expected to deliver, such as the way we have moved planning committees and community engagement online due to the pandemic. We are exploring place based focus groups that will continue to run virtually even after the pandemic given their benefits of bringing together everyone from across the Park in an efficient way with reduced travel and venue hire. We have also had to adapt to working from home and the challenges that has brought and the report demonstrates that despite all these challenges and the increase in determination times we have managed to maintain our high quality service including offering free pre-application and handling numerous enforcement enquiries.

In addition, the framework includes our National Headline Indicators (statistics on Local Development Plan age, effective land supply, project planning, approval rates and enforcement) which can be found at the end of the document at Part Five. Part One tells the story of how we have improved on last year's performance and gives our annual update on headline development issues in the National Park, development plan scheme, legacy cases, and pre-application service.

Our priorities as a Planning Service

The [Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-21](#), published in September 2020, sets out how the country will deal with the economic, health and social crisis that the coronavirus has brought. The priority is to build back fairer and stronger, thinking about how we rebound from this pandemic. Last year the focus was on climate emergency and we demonstrated how we were tailoring our work to these priorities. The focus this year is green recovery – new jobs, good jobs and green jobs - and we can demonstrate how our work in the planning service contributes towards this programme.

Green Jobs

Scottish Government actions under this section include many investments that will affect place planning in rural areas such as £100m over the next five years to a Green Jobs Fund, investing £150 million in forestry, boost youth employment in nature and land-based jobs. Work Local Challenge Programme will support local work hubs and office space solutions to enhance workplace choices. Build on Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to support the most vulnerable locations.

Before the pandemic we had already supported new business hubs at Aberfoyle and Drymen and we want to see more of these coming forward working with our partners in economic development teams at the Councils. Successful bids to the RTIF fund are delivering improved rural visitor infrastructure at Loch Katrine and Ben A'an. Joint working with the Strathard community has developed a co-designed framework to guide future development and land use to net zero.

> **See case study 2 about visitor pressures and case study 1 on the new leadership centre.**

Equality and Helping Young People

Scottish Government actions under this section include delivering of affordable homes to the end of March 2021 to meet the aim of delivering 50,0000 affordable homes, working towards the Housing to 2040 Vision to deliver good quality, energy efficient, zero carbon housing with access to outdoor space, transport links, digital connectivity and community services. Take forward ambitions for 20 minute neighbourhoods. Over £500 million over 5 years for walking, cycling and wheeling. Redesign our communities to respond to the pandemic using Local Place Plans.

Our priority is to continue to use planning policy to support affordable homes, see quality of outcomes section. Also we continue to support communities in preparing Local Place Plans. And there has been investment in interim measures to increase active travel such as wider pavements in the villages around the Park.

> **See case study 4 about local place plans.**

Part 1 Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

There are four overall measures against which our performance is assessed:

- **Quality of outcomes;**
- **Quality of service and engagement;**
- **Governance; and**
- **Culture of continuous improvement.**

There are a number of case studies highlighting broader activity and explaining how we have been focussing on high quality development on the ground (Case Studies 1 and 2). We evidence quality of service and engagement by (Case Study 3). In light of planning reforms we are working on place plans (Case Study 4). Finally, we have been building our resilience during the pandemic which is Case Study 5.

CASE STUDY 1 **Leadership centre**	CASE STUDY 3 **Strathard Framework** – Virtual Engagement	CASE STUDY 5 **Adapting to new ways of working**
CASE STUDY 2 **Visitor infrastructure and facilities**	CASE STUDY 4 **Community Local Place Plans**	

Case Study Topics	Issues covered in PPF10	Case Study Topics	Issues covered in PPF10
Design	1	Interdisciplinary Working	
Conservation	1	Collaborative Working	2
Regeneration		Community Engagement	2, 3, 4
Environment		Placemaking	
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	3	Process Improvement	5
Housing Supply		Project Management	
Affordable Housing	4	Skills Sharing	5
Economic Development		Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes		Transport	
Planning Applications		Active Travel	

Quality of Outcomes – demonstrating the added value delivered by planning

Monitoring Outcomes 2020/21

Improving design of new development and enhancing places remains a key objective of the service. We continue to use our **Design and Placemaking Guidance**. The **2020 Monitoring Report** demonstrates how we are delivering the vision set out in the Local Development Plan. We take the opportunity within this report to showcase and celebrate some of the year's successes.

Housing

There was been a drop in both housing approvals and completions in 2020/21 due to the pandemic. However, the most significant approvals were 14 new affordable homes at Croftamie, and renewals for 12 new homes in Arrochar and 8 new homes at Balloch.

New Homes in Balloch

Despite a pause in construction, 12 of the 24 new homes have been completed at Balloch and 4 new flats in Callander. A high quality finish was achieved in both schemes through close monitoring and approval of conditions was undertaken despite pandemic restrictions – in relation to signing off materials and approving the final planting scheme. The implementation of our climate design policy continues to be a success with new buildings approved including low and zero carbon technology – mainly air source heat pumps and solar PV. The new housing as shown above at Balloch includes solar PV built into the roof.

Tourism

The number of tourism applications dropped due to the pandemic but we still approved 16 new self-catering units, 14 bed-spaces and 23 stances for pods/caravans. These numbers are for 2020 calendar year but in early 2021 we also saw the approval of a further 12 timber holiday lodges at Strathyre holiday park.

We also saw 72 bed spaces and 24 self-catering units completed. Notably 24 new bed spaces were completed at a new bunkhouse in Balloch providing low cost accommodation.

In terms of self-catering, high quality units were completed at Auchendennan at Loch Lomond and at Ardlui Retreat.

Auchendennan Loch Lomond   *Ardlui Retreat, Loch Lomond*

There were also numerous applications relating to car park extensions to respond to visitor pressures. Also due to the pandemic we dealt with numerous enquiries about temporary uses. Case study 2 covers this in more detail.

Monitoring Outcomes 2020/21 cont.

Active and Sustainable Travel
In 2020, 2.3km of paths were given permission, which provided new visitor infrastructure such as the new promontory viewpoint at Loch Katrine, providing a pleasant stopping point and scenic diversion to the Great Trossachs Path. Also 1.3km of paths within the RSPB reserve at Loch Lomond will link together existing paths, and offer visitors a new experience closer to nature and circular options with an attractive shelter. In terms of sustainable travel, there were again a number of positive contributions with notable cases including an affordable housing approval at Croftamie where the village has limited access to public transport and there was potential for residents to make use of active travel so a condition was included for a Travel Plan to encourage measures such as e-car charging and secure cycle storage.

Cultural Heritage
We handled 20 Listed Building consents this financial year including a complex case at Kilmun Pier for an overnight ferry berth which had received 26 objections in relation to impact on the historical structure. Approval was given it as it secured the ongoing maintenance of the pier and had no significant adverse impacts on the setting of the pier.

Update
Cononish gold mine (see case study from PPF9), is now producing gold and we participated with the makers on a new documentary called Gold Town which was aired on BBC in March 2021. This major development requires continued monitoring to ensure high quality outcomes in terms of enhancement and protection of the environment.

Mini Case Study
It is also worth noting a significant investment in Luss for a new distillery, visitor centre and restaurant in order to enhance the visitor offering. It is a very well designed and thought out proposal from the concept to the siting of the buildings and materials. The processing of the application is covered in more detail in the next section in relation to customer service.

The focus is on the 'experience' starting with education/history in the 'visitor centre' then tour of the working distillery with tasting and then optional tour of the bottling and storage facility. The gin/whiskey production itself is also key as it will be sold locally and more widely. The restaurant and shop are ancillary (to increase dwell time and provide additional sources of income).

A greenhouse is proposed where they will grow the plants to flavour the gin (being produced initially ahead of the whiskey that has longer maturation timeframe) – the growing space will be shared with the community. We also secured the delivery of a separate proposal – a new village green – via use of a planning condition as the green is to provide a safe walking route to the distillery.

CGI of proposal from key viewing point in Luss (Source: Agent)

CASE STUDY 1 – Leadership Centre on the banks of Loch Lomond

Unique high quality development that brings added value to the built and natural environment.

Overview

In November 2020, the Planning and Access committee were minded to approve a new Leadership Centre on the banks of Loch Lomond, subject to a legal agreement. The development will deliver a 'world class' venue for leadership training and includes a loch-side auditorium with meeting rooms together with accommodation in the adjacent woodland. The development was proposed in the grounds of Ross Priory, a Category A listed building, owned by Strathclyde University near the village of Gartocharn. Strathclyde University would share the use of the facility and generate much needed income to invest in the historic fabric of the estate.

The proposal generated objection from the community who were concerned it ran contrary to Scotland's net-zero targets, would cause light pollution, damage to protected sites and species, and harm the water quality and tranquillity of the loch shore. In total there were 43 public objections with 3 in support. There were no objections from the statutory consultees. The case was also subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA). It was an unusual and complex application where a carefully balanced decision had to be reached by our planning committee.

Goal

The application was received in March 2020 just before the pandemic forced staff to work from home. Even so, it was important to ensure that we maintained our standards of service and undertook a thorough assessment addressing all points of concern. Given the nature of the development and its location, it was key at the outset to ensure we were clear about how the principle of the development would be assessed.

We responded to pre-application engagement where we guided the applicant in relation to our expectations regarding the justification in terms of public benefits to address the principle policies. This laid the foundations for negotiations regarding developer contributions for heritage. We also requested proportionate information to allow us to gain an understanding of the scale and nature of the potential investment and its likely contribution to the local economy. This enabled us to balance the policy position of restraint with the public benefits that the development could deliver. It was also important to seek to address the many points of concern raised whilst also being proportionate in relation to our requests for additional information.

There were various complex impacts that required careful consideration and to ensure that we were transparent about our decision making, taking all views into account. Advice and support in respect of the process of determining the application was also provided to the Community Council and individuals.

Design icon 1

Aerial view across the application site with Ross Priory golf course and main building to the left of the application site.

Outcome

The proposal significantly contributes towards quality of outcomes – high quality development. There are very few examples of proposals such as this, where there has been considered by exception due to their purpose or mission reflecting benefits for wellbeing, health and inspiration that can be gained from the natural environment. The proposal is a unique facility of the highest architectural quality and is a place to nurture and support future entrepreneurs and public sector leaders. There is always a careful balance in considering new development in the National Park, to ensure this sensitive area is looked after while also supporting the social and economic wellbeing of the area.

CGI of Buildings

In order to mitigate impacts the proposal is subject to 21 planning conditions on various aspects such as design specifications, light impact management plan, tree retention and protection, connection to the public drainage network, protected species protection. The design included air source heat pumps and solar voltaic panels to ensure renewable energy is available. Natural materials, slate and timber, also ensure low embodied energy.

There was also **significant added value** to be obtained by way of £150,000 in financial contributions towards the direct protection and enhancement of the estate's built heritage (in addition to investment by Strathclyde University made possible by the proposal). A long term trees and woodland management plan was also secured to ensure the proper establishment of the 126 proposed additional native trees (compensating loss of 27 trees) and control of invasive non-native species. A revised foul drainage strategy was also negotiated with the developer committing a significant investment to connect the development (and the existing Ross Priory) to the public sewer.

The clock was stopped due to a request for further information on flooding (following an objection from SEPA) which was quickly resolved. The application was taken to committee 8 months after submission during a pandemic and given the complex nature of the application the timeframe is something to be applauded. We are still working through the complex legal agreement and the permission will be issued once concluded.

This case study contributes towards the **Quality of Outcomes**.
Key markers:
11- regular and proportionate policy advice, 15 – developer contributions
Key Areas:
Design, Conservation, Planning Applications
Stakeholders:
Authority Planning Staff, Planning Committee, General Public
Name of Key Officer:
Caroline Strugnall, Development Management Planner

CASE STUDY 2 – Visitor Infrastructure and Facilities to respond to visitor pressures

Development of visitor infrastructure and facilities has been a corporate wide response with planning helping to determine cases efficiently

Overview

This year has been unprecedented in many ways due to the pandemic, but for the National Park the pressure on our visitor infrastructure and facilities came into sharp focus. There was a surge in visitor numbers in 2020 as lockdown measures eased and it is expected that there will be similar demand for day trips and staycations during 2021 as restrictions are changed.

It was positive that more Scots discovered the natural environment closer to home however there have been pressures on the environment and communities. In order to help co-ordinate management and communications we are working with partners as part of a Safe Recovery Action Group (Police Scotland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Transport Scotland and the four local authorities) and are alive to the challenges presented by the high volume of visitors, particularly post-lockdown. The key pressures in 2020 included irresponsible parking and road congestion, littering, and antisocial behaviour associated with informal camping. The trading environment for our tourism businesses has also been very challenging. As a planning authority we have a key role to play in this response, dealing with planning applications for visitor infrastructure and facilities efficiently whilst working with our communities and businesses.

Goal

In the planning team we were keen to support the Park wide effort to improve and increase infrastructure and facilities for visitors to respond to the post-lockdown pressures of visitors. We must ensure we work in partnership with the rest of the organisation and with partners to create a joined up approach.

Outcomes

The outcome has been the successful handling of 24 enquiries regarding temporary uses and permissions for temporary toilets by our team, outdoor seating from various cafes and restaurants, and overnight motorhome stays.

We have also handled a number of planning applications for visitor car parks:

- A permanent car park at Luss to offset the removal of on-street parking that was affecting the conservation area (250 spaces, approved Sept 2020).
- Extension to Ben A'an car park with replacement planting (28 spaces in addition to the 45 spaces)
- Extension to Stronachlachar car park with 2 new Electric Vehicle charging points, 4 motorhome service points (26 spaces in addition to the 30 spaces).
- Extension to community hall car park at Port of Menteith for use by hall users and visitors to the area (10x spaces).
- Extension to car park at boat hire in Lochgoilhead for use by motorhomes (5x spaces).

Cars parked on road verge

CASE STUDY 2 – Visitor Infrastructure and Facilities to deal with visitor pressures cont.

Outcomes cont.

Increasing car park capacity alone is not a long term solution given climate change and we recognise the need to shift to sustainable and active modes of transport. We need to balance this with the immediate pressure on local areas and the safety issues resulting from traffic parking irresponsibly. So as a starting point we ensure Electric Vehicle charging and cycle parking is incorporated into the designs. Consideration is now being given towards sustainable longer term solutions such as exploring shuttle bus options and we are working closely with capital delivery team colleagues on infrastructure solutions on the ground.

Also as part of this response to visitor pressures we consulted the community at Kinlochard about possible temporary car park solutions. This was not supported by the community who were seeking longer term sustainable solutions and look at alternative solutions that did not impact on the residents so we decided to explore this with them and continue to monitor the situation over this coming season. This demonstrates how we engage and work with communities at early pre-planning stages to reach the right solutions.

This case study shows how early collaboration with partners and engagement with communities can result in the smooth processing of applications and avoid any delays and controversy. The case study also shows quality of outcomes with car parks already in place at all the locations mentioned, ready for the 2020/21 season that are of high quality design and layout with extensive landscaping and tree planting as part of the proposals increasing biodiversity and helping with climate mitigation - around 60 to 70 additional trees and only 6 removed from all schemes listed.

Luss Car Park North end including picnic area

Site Plan of Stronachlachar car park extension

This case study contributes towards the **Quality of Outcomes** *but also **Quality of Service and Engagement.***

Key markers:

3 – Early collaboration

Key Areas:

Collaborative working, Community engagement

Stakeholders:

Authority Planning Staff

Name of Key Officer:

Various officers

Quality of Service and Engagement

This section provides evidence that our planning service is undertaking positive actions to support sustainable economic growth by providing clarity and certainty and a positive customer experience.

LIVEPark newsletter and blogs

In 2020, we have continued to keep our blog up-to-date on our website, and issued a further newsletter – called LIVEPark news.

We issued a blog on climate change utilising case studies from last year's PPF and also on placemaking project at Lochearnhead and our work on our indicative regional spatial strategies.

The climate change blog, tied in with Scotland's national climate change awareness week 14th – 20th September 2020.

In our second instalment of LIVEPark News we highlighted the 2019 monitoring report, action programme and some of the latest approvals. Since we advertised the newsletter on our website inviting people to join the list we had a few more people sign up.
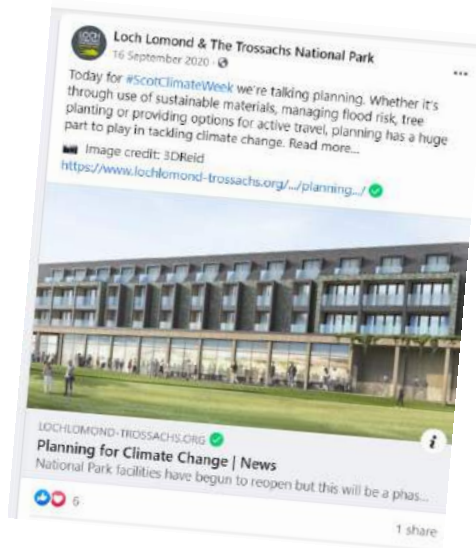
Development Plan Scheme

Our Development Plan Scheme states that we are preparing a new 10 year Local Development Plan under the new Planning Scotland Act 2019 and to align with the new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Scottish Planning Policy. Based on the progression of the NPF4, which has been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic, our 2020 Development Plan Scheme was reviewed and our timescales also shifted by a year.

We continue to be focussed on careful project planning for the delivery of the new Local Development Plan and at the end of March 2021 we remain fully on track to deliver the plan by 2024. The case studies demonstrate how our focus has been on Community Place Plans and also Strathard Framework, new planning guidance. In addition to the work on Strathfillan, we have also been supporting Killin community to prepare a place plan using a story map – see here just recently published at March 2021.

Action Programme

The action programme includes a summary of progress over last 3 years. At the end of March 2021 the status of our 67 allocated LDP sites was:

- **56%** of LDP sites are being progressed or completed i.e. with planning permission, under construction, subject to pre-application.
- **45%** of the LDP sites have **no planning permission**.

Given half the sites are progressing, including those subject to pre-application, then it is considered the plan is on track to support delivery of the majority of the sites over the plan period.

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

This year we have spent time preparing an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) to inform the Scottish Government's thinking on the new National Planning Framework 4. We published our indicative iRSS in September 2020 alongside other authorities. We published a blog to set out the purpose of the iRSS.

We focused in on 4 themes –
- Climate and Nature
- The Rural Economy
- Scotland's Health and Wellbeing
- Scotland's People

It considers cross-boundary issues and opportunities in the Forth Valley area for catchment-scale working which could help support climate resilience, enhance natural capital and decarbonisation of the region and support the rural economy through tourism. Discussions with the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region have highlighted the strategic role of the National Park in relation to central Scotland (50% of Scotland's population is within one hour of the National Park) and the opportunities this presents for health, wellbeing and inclusion.

We have continued to work with partners and the Scottish Government since the publication. In particular we made a small amendment reflecting on the other iRSS publications. We saw other opportunities to look at green networks with Tay region and potential for improved alignment with Argyll and Bute on various key issues.

Community Stakeholder Engagement

Last year as an organisation we undertook a review of engagement across all key stakeholder groups, including communities, via a survey issued to Community Councils and Community Development Trusts in October 2020 on a range of suggested engagement options.

Feedback received showed that 83% of respondents considered more regular virtual engagement between the Park Authority and their community organisation would be mutually beneficial. The majority of respondents felt that this engagement should be a mixture of both Park-wide and specific area-Community Support and Engagement.

The survey results will help inform thinking on how place-based and/or possibly Park-wide engagement could be enhanced during 2021/22. Initial thinking is that **place based forums** could be hosted bi-annually or quarterly and be used to engage on specific topics or issues – to be agreed jointly between us and communities as a pre-planned programme for the year ahead. This should ensure a manageable programme for the Park Authority as well as communities. It is hoped that this approach will also facilitate stronger joint working, understanding and input from communities into some of our newly arising work streams such as engagement on local Visitor Management solutions, our future Regional Spatial Strategy, piloting a Regional Land Use Partnership, the next Local Development Plan and sharing learning on Community Place Plans.

Being clear and proportionate - Developer contributions

As reported last year in PPF9, we have an adopted developer contributions policy within the Local Development Plan and housing supplementary guidance. The Developer's contributions guidance, adopted in June 2018, is still current. Case Study 1 showcases how we have negotiated a developer contribution in the region of £150,000 towards the protection and repair of a listed building at Ross Priory, Loch Lomond. We also received an affordable housing contribution from a proposal for a new house in a building group that could not provide on-site affordable units.

Complaints Recording

In 2020/21 we handled 6 official complaints and 10 front line complaints. This is a drop in the number of official complaints when compared to previous years when we have received an average of 9 complaints a year and also a further 19 frontline complaints.

Planning phone line

We provide a planning enquiry line where members of the public and other stakeholders can phone up with general planning-related queries. These can range from questions about how the planning system works, how to get pre-application advice on sites on the market, through to how to submit an application or make a representation. Despite some IT issues with answering calls whilst working from home, we have continued to offer this service, with a voicemail message indicating the timeframe for response when calls cannot be answered immediately.

Pre-application service

Throughout 2020-21, despite the challenges of working remotely, we have continued to provide an excellent **free** pre-application enquiry service. We have an enquiry form on the website and guidance notes setting out the minimum requirements of information required to handle an application and targeting a 28 day timescale to respond. In 2020/21, we handled 280 pre-applications which is close to our annual average of 300 pre-applications. Of the 188 decided applications 52 were subject to pre-applications which was 27.6% of applications.

Mini Case study – Luss Distillery – a smooth application process

As mentioned in the quality of outcomes section, this year we handled a complex application in Luss Outstanding Conservation Area for a new distillery and visitor facility. This had the potential of being a tricky application, needing significant amount of resource as there were issues of design and impact on conservation area, flood risk, air quality and noise, waste products, visitor pressure and parking.

However the application was handled very smoothly due in part to the applicant's role and our free pre-application service. The applicant had a strong project management team in place and the submission was very comprehensive. It followed a short initial period of pre-application discussions where we held meetings to discuss their emerging proposals. The pre-app looked at various options for siting and massing of the proposed warehouse and resulted in a preferred site selection which overcame what would have been fundamental issues relating to conservation area impacts had this engagement not been undertaken.

The applicant took it upon themselves to contact each of the statutory consultees separately prior to submission to discuss and deal with potential issues so there was broad agreement on most aspects prior to submission of the application itself. They also engaged directly with the community council and community which seems to have helped limit objection and avoid a committee-level decision. The applicant held twice weekly meetings with us to keep momentum, discuss progress and issues arising. Aside from some minor design tweaks to address roads concerns and points of detailed design in respect of the conservation area there were no barriers to smooth progression through the system.

See the thank you received on page 29 of this report.

CASE STUDY 3 – Strathard Framework Virtual Engagement

Running a virtual engagement, the advantages and disadvantages explained.

Overview

In last year's PPF we reported on how we were preparing a Framework for the Strathard area – a large area at the heart of the Park.

Over the last year the project has been disrupted by the pandemic, we postponed the second engagement workshop in the hope that we would be able to run this face-to-face but as time went by, and restrictions remained in place, we realised we had to move to a virtual workshop to keep the momentum going.

In October 2020 we ran an online engagement workshop. If we had run this face-to-face it would have only allowed a week from the first workshop to prepare. We decided to give ourselves plenty of time to prepare given it was a new way of working. We took all the information gathered from the first workshop and presented it on maps and made the event more structured to handle the change from face-to-face to virtual. The workshop was different than we had planned but there were many advantages of holding an event like this online. This case study presents our experience.

Goal

The goal of the project is to produce a strategic framework that will guide future planning and land use decisions, as explained in last year's PPF. The goal this year was to run a successful virtual event. This involved the challenge to meaningfully engage and gather thoughts from stakeholders on the vision for the Framework and the ideas and priorities for the Framework. We also wanted to ensure we continued with the co-design approach and involve steering group of the council, community and Architecture and Design Scotland along the way.

Outcome

The outcomes so far have been an extremely successful second virtual workshop in October 2020, with around 40 attendees - agencies, landowners, businesses and the community - all coming together discussing planning and land use matters in Strathard.

Planning Aid Scotland, the workshop facilitator and the project lead in planning and land use at the National Park, prepared pre-recorded presentations. This was to ensure all the stakeholders were up to speed on the issues to be discussed, in case they hadn't attended the first workshop and also to cut out time for people to sit through around 2 hours of presenting. This was a real benefit to running the session virtually and attendees could get prepared for the event in their own time and it reduced the time where we all needed to be in the same place at the same time.
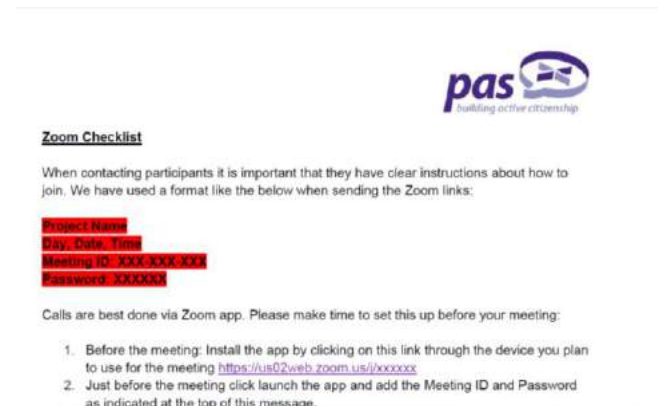
*Video conferencing checklist prepared to provide to participants*

A vision shaping session went well as Planning Aid Scotland had prepared an overall vision, and 5 sub-area visions, in advance of the workshop so people could comment. We also used an image prepared by Architecture and Design Scotland to help people image what the future might look like for Strathard.

In terms of discussing the issues, ideas and priorities for each sub-area we used breakout rooms, just as would be used face-to-face. In these sessions we didn't have the benefit of being able to draw on maps as would normally be the case, so we pre-prepared a map for discussion (PAS put together a facilitator pack) with all the opportunities and ideas mapped for people to see and talk about, and a list of questions to provoke discussion on each topic. This worked really well, albeit we ran out of time and didn't get a chance to discuss all topics. A lesson learned was to give us more time for the workshop session.

All of the 5 sub-groups successfully fed back to the main room with their top 3 priorities. We really managed to gauge the main priorities from this final session.

It is also worth noting that the external and internal steering group continued to meet regularly even after moving meetings to a virtual platform. They continued to oversee communication, community engagement and agreeing project outputs/outcomes and final structure of the framework. It also ensured joined up services between ourselves and the council. The benefits of meeting virtually was that there was no need to travel to Strathard for these regular meetings, saving on carbon.

The next step was to prepare a draft Framework for consultation in Spring 2021.
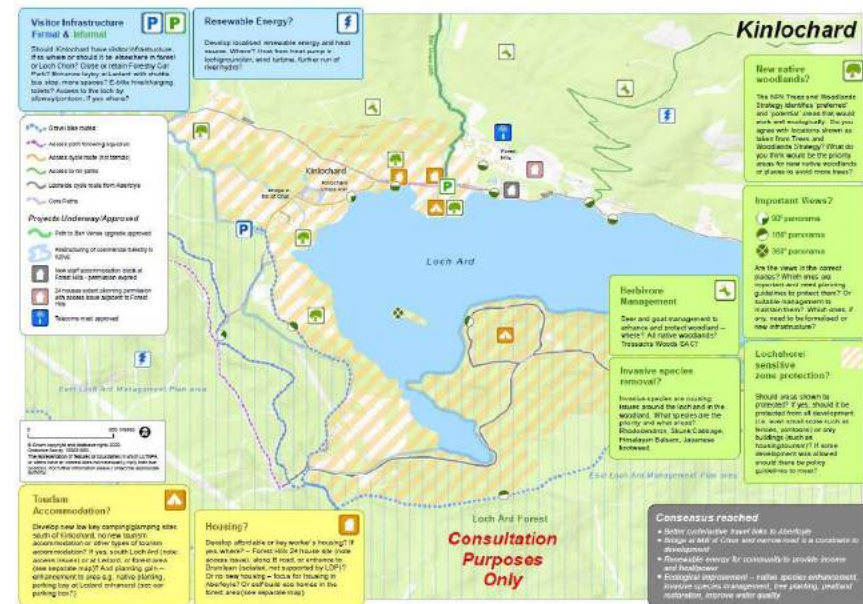
Example of Map used at workshop and the themed questions

This case study contributes towards the **Governance**.
Key markers:
10 – Cross-section stakeholders engagement; 12 corporate working and 13 – sharing good practice
Key Areas:
LDP statutory guidance, community engagement
Stakeholders:
Authority Other Staff, General Public
Name of Key Officer:
Kirsty Sweeney

CASE STUDY 4 – Community Place Plans

Using as an engagement and consultation evidence tool

Overview

This case study illustrates how Community Place Plans can be used to take action, influence and deliver change on the ground. There are two aspects of work this case study covers Strathfillan, home to the villages of Crianlarich and Tyndrum.

The first is in relation to housing supply which has strongly been raised as a key issue by the community. There has been limited interest from private developers in delivering housing in the area. The issue has been exacerbated through one of the key employers in the area, the new Cononish gold and silver mine, expanding their workforce. This has added to an already long housing waiting list and unmet housing demand. Therefore, to try and address these challenges a multi-partner housing delivery group has been set up, by the National Park, covering the Strathfillan area.

The second is in relation to a new project called 'Wild Strathfillan' which is in very early stages looking at what habitat and environmental and cultural improvements could be undertaken in the glen and enhance people opportunities to experience it. It is connected to the Greater Cononish Glen Management Plan, planning gain required by the approval for a gold and silver mine, and the Countryside Trust are going to receive funds from the operator annually to provide wider connected gains for biodiversity in the area.

Goal

The goal was to use the Community Place Plan engagement and consultation evidence to drive change in key issues for the area. The reversing of biodiversity loss, improving opportunities to experience the landscape and the cultural heritage of the area and addressing the need for the delivery of more affordable housing.

For housing, a sub-group on housing brought together a range of key stakeholders including those sitting on the Place Plan steering group to represent all the different groups. The National Park chaired the working group with the aim to discuss and address housing pressures, find solutions (development sites) and ultimately try and stimulate housing delivery.

The goal for the Wild Strathfillan project is to improve woodland cover, the condition of protected sites, restore peatland, improve the condition of the River Fillan, as well delivering the Greater Cononish Glen Management Plan. The Place Plan is being used as a way to engage with the community about this project and gather views and stimulate action to help with this project. It is also intended that the Community Place Plan will be used as evidence of community support for the Wild Strathfillan project in support of any future funding applications.

Outcome

In terms of housing, progress has been good, with several ideas presented to the community through the community place plan consultation events in February 2021 and there has been the opportunity for the community to provide their views of different land areas and its suitability. This has been valuable and has helped inform thinking on the most appropriate sites to progress site investigation works on. The sub-group has also enabled agencies the opportunity to come together to ensure that housing in the area is supported in the Local Authority Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and that partners agree the timetable for delivery.

CASE STUDY 4 – Community Place Plans Cont.

This partnership approach has enabled all partners to understand the housing need and discuss opportunities and options to deliver different housing models and help address the supply issues in the area and help create a real bit of momentum to the project. The delivery group has been a great way for partners to share information and experience.

For example, it has provided an opportunity to look and discuss innovative housing delivery models where the housing association can work with the local businesses and the Development Trust to deliver housing, including exploring community owned housing. The benefits of this collaborative approach has seen the Development Trust seek to have further information on the suitability of community owned housing as part of this project. During discussions at this group the National Park and the housing association have shared examples of community led housing delivered elsewhere and also provided direct contact details to these organisations. This has meant that the Development Trust can hear first-hand their experiences of community led housing delivery and answer questions on the specific challenges and opportunities they faced.

As a result of this sub-group on housing being established there is now housing identified in the council's Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and a preferred site is being progressed for housing and support for the need for housing a key community issue for their community place plan. Desk top analysis has been undertaken on several sites, engagement held with relevant land owners, pre application discussions held with development management and the community have been inputting their views on the merits of the sites being looked at. The community have continued to strongly support the need for additional housing which has helped make the case for investment. It is anticipated that there will be a planning application submitted over the coming months.

In terms of Wild Strathfillan project, the engagement has seen the community highlight the value they place on the natural and cultural heritage of the area and express support for greater access to experience it. The community saw opportunities that this type of initiative could bring to the area supporting a green recovery. There were many suggestions put forward by the community of project ideas and these will be developed further at future engagement events as the projects develops its scope.

The case study demonstrates how we are using planning to enable multiple outcomes. The final events with the wider community were held in February and the next step is to write the Plan – watch this space!

This case study contributes towards the **Quality of Service and Engagement.**

Key markers:

3: Early Collaboration

Key Areas:

Affordable Housing, Community Engagement

Stakeholders:

General Public and Hard to Reach Groups

Name of Key Officer:

Derek Manson

Governance – Ensuring that our structures and processes were proportionate, effective and fit for purpose

Adapting to the pandemic - Challenges

There were several key **challenges** brought by the pandemic:
- The closure of all National Park offices
- IT limitations
- Impact on staff availability due to school and nursery closures
- Restricted site visits

The **closure of all National Park Offices** meant that initially we were unable to carry out all statutory publicity requirements. Cases with publicity that allowed for representations to be made within three weeks of the office closing were put on hold; we also put on hold new cases submitted as neighbour notification could not be carried out. Once the office opened for essential tasks which could not be performed at home we dealt with the two sets of stalled cases.

Limitations in terms of access to our IT systems (particularly Uniform and Idox DMS) meant some staff, particularly providing support and validation, were not able to be as productive as working in the office. Uniform was only accessible by means of software which was limited in licence numbers not only by cost, but also capacity of our servers. Access was set by rota, and over time the access to the system has increased. We used team **Whatsapp** groups to keep track of who was using the system in case slots were free at the last minute.

Whilst we were still able to carry out enforcement site visits, planning **site visits**, where required, were not permitted until July 2020. This led to an increase in determination times.

Adapting to the pandemic - Innovation

The sudden move from office-based to remote working meant that our **workflow**, which had been by physical files, now went fully electronic. As a small authority we have not found workflow software affordable and the system requires further refinement and improvement, however it contributes to our carbon footprint reduction.

Coronavirus/Covid-19 – Planning and Access services

Service status   April 20, 2020

- Our offices are **now closed** to the public and staff. All staff are continuing to **work from home**, with restricted access to some of our systems at times.

- In terms of **phonecalls**, we would ask that you either email your case officer direct or planning@lochlomond-trossachs.org and we will call you back.

- We are not able to accept hard copy correspondence via **post**. Please email planning@lochlomond-trossachs.org

- The March **Planning and Access Committee** was postponed. This has been rescheduled to 27 April 2020 and will be held as on virtual meeting webcast for members of the public to view. Further details can be found on the **Planning and Access Committee webpage.**

- The **Local Review Body** planned for March has been postponed, and we are looking at alternative ways of holding this meeting. If you are intending to lodge a Review or Appeal statutory timescales still apply at the time of writing.

- **Meetings** are no longer taking place face-to-face. We can accommodate some conference calls by arrangement using Skype for Business.

- No **site visits** are taking place, unless for emergency enforcement inspections.

Snapshot of Website Notice During Lockdown April 2020

Keeping agents and applicants informed of the inevitable delays was important and we updated templates regularly as changes took place. We have a webpage for status updates, and we used Twitter to disseminate key changes. We also sent out an email to all agents and applicants with cases pending determination in November 2020 to explain why planning applications were taking longer to be processed and what steps could be taken by them to help.

Although the March Planning and Access Committee was postponed, we prioritised decision making and were able to set up the first **virtual and live-streamed committee** in April 2020 (see case study 5).

Member Training and Development

This year has been a very different year for our National Park Board and Planning committee who have moved to exclusively virtual meetings. During this period we have ran one training and briefing session on:
- Tree Preservation Orders; and
- Local Review Body Procedures

Continuing to develop the planning team

This year has been a busy year again with a continuing programme of training, both in-house and externally. A big benefit of the pandemic has been many more training courses offered online which staff would not have normally been able to attend due to travel.

Internal Training
Due to the pandemic we only ran one in-house training session this year on conflict resolution in November 2020.

External courses/conferences
May 2020 – The planning system – coping with COVID
RTPI Planning and Ecology Webinar
June 2020 – Planning Skills Webinar with Scottish Natural Heritage
The Value in Engagement in Land Use Planning Decisions By Scottish Land Commission/Nick Wright
Design for a Changing Climate: Climate, Health & Place
Planning Podcast – Brodies
Geddes Commemorative Lecture – Shaping the new normal with a wellbeing economy: the role for place and planning
July 2020 – Improvement Service - Land, Planning & Delivering Rural Affordable Housing
Sept 2020 RTPI Scottish Planner Live – Connecting Planning, Health and Place
Oct 2020 RTPI Enforcement Week – Prosecutions and injunctions and Getting It Right – Enforcement Notices
Feb 2021 Common Place – Climate Change engagement
Scotlands' Flood Risk Management Conference

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Performance Improvement Project

This year our performance has dropped significantly due to working from home and the pressures several staff were under in terms of home schooling. Unlike other (local) authorities who had offices open due to essential services continuing, our HQ remained closed and we had issues with access to our IT systems due to constraints for a small organisation which was explained in the governance section.

We use 'stop-the-clock' to remove time from the determination periods which is beyond our control (for example waiting on the receipt of a bat survey), however we still have determination times greater than the statutory timeframes. We have looked again at using processing agreements and the steps other authorities take in order to ensure timescales are met but we do not consider them appropriate. We are a small authority with strong long standing relationships with our agents who submit applications. There is limited interest in entering into processing agreements and a mutual understanding between ourselves and the agents that, whilst the decision may take longer, there is a positive and co-operative relationship through negotiations and revisions to plans in order to achieve high quality decision making. As explained in the governance section of this report, our complaints are low. Our statistics are factual and we are not masking the true determination times which often happens with the use of processing agreements. Despite this we are still investigating ways to improve our decision making timescales and have recently filled a vacant post in order to improve team capacity.

Improvements to procedures

As Case Study 5 demonstrates we have been working this year to change our processes to adapt to working virtually because of the pandemic and this has brought improvements to our procedures.

There have been many benefits of running Planning and Access committee virtually such as reaching a wider audience who normally could not have attended a meeting in the office at 1.30pm in the afternoon.

We have also stopped the use of the paper files, which had long been used by Development Management officers to keep paper copies of the site plans and elevations proposed for the site visit, as everyone was working from home and it was difficult to prepare these printed copies from the office. We are now in the process of rolling out tablets to planners. This will save time and resources printing, reduce our carbon footprint and allow officers access to their files and plans whilst out on site. As well as replacing the paper file, the tablets can be used to take photographs and make phone calls.

Officer trialling tablet for site visits

Staff wellbeing - regular team meetings

Due to the pandemic team meetings and regular one-to-ones for both Development Planning and Development Management teams became a really important way of communicating. In Development Planning team meetings were increased to once a week to allow for a general check in, team collaboration on important work streams like the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy, Monitoring and Community Engagement. It also really helped with well-being having the regular team contact when we didn't have our over the desk discussions. Also our team WhatsApp group helped to keep communication going between the team to improve wellbeing, so we could share challenges and experiences of working from home.
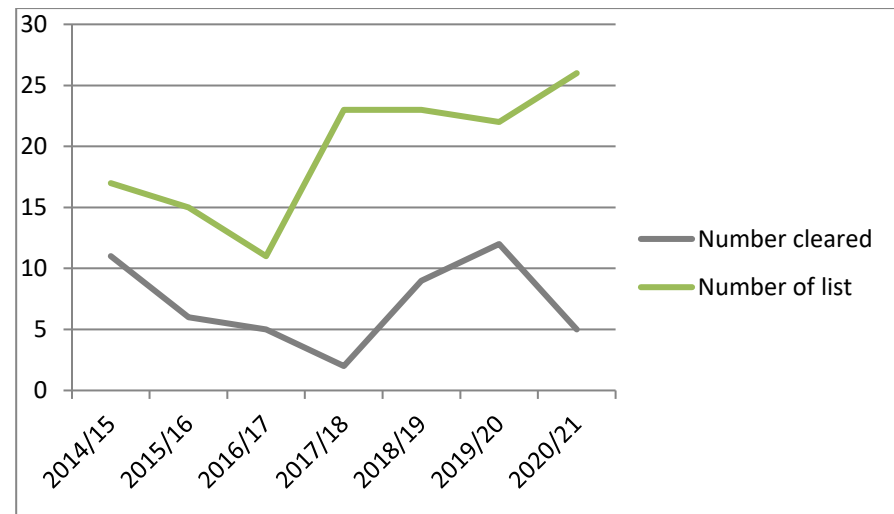
Dealing with 'legacy cases'

The recording of legacy cases (over 1 year old) remains a priority area for service improvement. This year we only managed to clear 5 legacy cases and we had 10 new cases added to the list that remain outstanding. The total number therefore rose to 26 from 22.

As in the previous 3 years, the legacy cases are significantly affected by **8 linked applications at Luss**, which although determined at Committee in October 2019, still await finalisation of the associated legal agreement - so unfortunately have not been determined within 2020/21 period. The drafting of the legal agreement for the 8 linked applications was initially complex and later progress of the draft was hampered by issues relating to various plans provided by the applicant. The legal work was finalised in early March 2021 but there was a last minute issue relating to the title deeds plans which prevented registration of the Section 75 meaning the planning permissions could not be issued. A revised agreement has now to be signed but is awaiting corrected plans from the applicant.

Next year our legacy balance will be significantly reduced as we are hoping a significant number of cases will be determined in 2021/22.

We have continued tracking cases as explained last year and noting the reasons that cases have extended beyond the 1 year determination period.
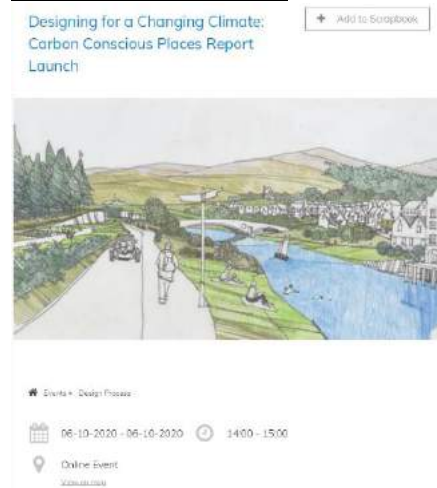
Most have had the 'clock stopped' for legitimate reasons outwith our control (for example awaiting a revised set of plans for design reasons or ecological/bat surveys) but this does not prevent them entering this category.

Legacy Cases Cleared and Total numbers per year.

Sharing Best Practice and Skills with others – examples from 2020/21

Strathard Framework

We have been working with Architecture and Design Scotland on the Strathard Framework and they were using the work as a pilot project as part of their research into carbon conscious places. So at the launch event for the report on 6th October 2020, Kirsty Sweeney presented the findings from the Strathard work at a virtual webinar. The webinar can still be viewed online at:

https://www.ads.org.uk/designing-for-a-changing-climate_report/

Kirsty also spoke at the Land Commission's session on Regional Land Use Partnership on the 28th July 2020, again sharing the work of the Strathard Framework and partnership working on that project.

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies

We have been very proactive at sharing our work on the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) at all the various workshops hosted by Scottish Government. This involved recording a presentation to showcase our iRSS which was shared with other authorities.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9P8YQvP8Ok

How to Guide for Local Place Plans

We also participated in the Scottish Community Development Centre and Nick Wright Planning research on drafting the community 'How To Guide' for preparing local place plans.
The full report can be viewed on the Scottish Government website:
https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-place-plans-guide-literature-review-final-report/pages/1/

RTPI Monitoring Outcomes

We also worked with Kevin Murray Associates on their research into monitoring of planning outcomes. We were selected as a pilot given our extensive ground breaking work in preparing annual detailed monitoring reports. The full report can be viewed on the RTPI website.

https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/november/measuring-what-matters-planning-outcomes-research/.

CASE STUDY 5 – Adapting to new ways of working – Virtual Committee
How we improved our systems and rose to the challenges of the pandemic

Overview

The pandemic has been a tough year and has impacted on our determination times particularly, but we have risen to the challenge and there are many lessons learned and new ways of working that have improved our service (see page 20). For example, before the pandemic we did not record or broadcast our Planning and Access Committee Meetings.

This case study will give an overview of how we used virtual Planning and Access Committee meetings to deliver our service and the lessons learned from this and also how staff have adapted by using technology more to help them with their jobs.

Snapshot of Planning and Access Committee Virtual Meeting

Goal

The goal was to ensure our service is fit for purpose during the pandemic and into the future. Another goal was to streamline the way we were working and deliver our service virtually to keep everyone safe. We discovered however there were many benefits to this change and it is an improvement to our service.

Outcomes

The first Planning and Access Committee meeting held virtually was on the 27th April 2020. Prior to the meeting we liaised closely with Cairngorms National Park Authority initially to understand the Lifesize software which we had chosen to adopt. We held a test session to ensure everyone was comfortable with the new technology.

We worked closely with our external legal planning advisors at Anderson Strathern. This was to ensure that all statutory requirements to deliver the meeting were met as a result of our temporary governance structure and by keeping up-to-date with all legislative changes as a result of COVID-19.

We kept a lessons learned log (see image below) which set out success, challenges and what we should have done differently so we could learn for the next meeting. The log was completed for each meeting held and as the year went on the meetings improved.

The initial lessons learned included the difficulties encountered by the committee clerk who was taking the minutes whilst monitoring who was on the call. So at the next meeting we ensured that monitoring who was present fell to a different member of staff.

CASE STUDY 5 – Cont.

Outcomes cont.

The second meeting was more challenging as this included speakers at the meeting who had made representations on the application. To enable this to happen we had to ensure the speakers were fully briefed about the procedure and protocols during the meeting.

We had a few challenges with the briefing session and people not attending and having to run additional sessions. This was logged and we ensured that the next meeting we ensured the briefing was further in advance of the meeting and reminders were set up.

At the second meeting an objector commented positively on the meeting process following the meeting.

We have moved the governance and management of meetings into corporate services to build resilience. We had previously relied on one individual to organise and take the minutes at the committee meetings but now we have various administrators who are able to take on this role and use a virtual platform.

Overall the virtual Planning and Access Committee meetings have been a huge success and we continue to offer a quality of service in our decision making by making decisions publicly and to probably a wider audience that before. At some meetings we have had as many as 60 to 90 people viewing the proceedings for some of the more interesting cases. We will continue to run virtual committees during the pandemic into next year and then we will review how to take this forward once committee are able to meet in person again.

A snapshot of our Lessons Learned Log

This case study contributes towards the **Governance** but also **Quality of Service and Engagement**

Key markers:
Continuous Improvement

Key Areas:
Skills Sharing, Process Improvement

Stakeholders:
Members of the Planning Committee, Authority Planning Staff

Name of Key Officer:
Bob Cook

Part 2 Supporting Evidence

In order to compile Part 1 above we have drawn on the following documents:

Website – Planning pages

Live Park Facebook

LIVE Park Twitter

Adopted Local Development Plan, Supplementary and Planning Guidance

Adopted Action Programme

Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance

Development Plan Scheme

Enforcement Charter
October 2018 – Planning Committee – Enforcement Charter

Trees and Woodlands Strategy

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

Case Study 1
Leadership Centre
Leadership Centre - Hunter Foundation
Full committee report -

News article about Leadership Centre

Case Study 2
Visitor Pressures in the National Park

June 2020 – Newspaper article on Visitor Pressure

Newspaper article on Visitor Pressure
Case Study 3
Strathard Framework

Community Life Plans

A&DS Carbon Conscious Places Report

A&DS Place Planning Reflections Report

Case Study 4
Strathfillan Place Plan

Strathfillan Community Facebook Page-

Stirling Housing Investment Plan – Tyndrum highlighted for 14 units

Case Study 5
Planning and Access Committee Virtual Meetings

Link to Committee Meetings page on website

The following are examples of positive feedback from our customers directly via email:

Applications

A short email to thank you for your hard work in bringing the Glen Luss Distillery application to a successful conclusion: not for getting to the 'right' answer but for the volume of work and effort you have put in regardless of outcome; it is clear that Caroline has spent a great deal of time in preparing her report and it is a credit to you and the team that the planning department is running at full capacity despite the ongoing pandemic, with little obvious delay.

We very much look forward to bringing this important project to life – and I hope you will be there to share a dram on opening day (unlikely to be ours!)
Luss Estates in relation to 2020/0185/DET Distillery

Passed on from Board Member - *CC Chair also said that he'd been well informed throughout by Alison ('who's done her job very thoroughly') and wished us all the best.*
Community Council in relation to 2018/0247/DET Kilmun Pier

Pre Application

Many thanks for the swift reply to my enquiry and the information you provided. It is so appreciated.
Enquirer

Monitoring/discharge of conditions

Thanks, this is great information & exactly what we were looking for.

Much appreciated.
Paul.
Agent

Strathard Framework

Thought that was great session yesterday – well done! & well done for all the YouTube vids as well – that must have been daunting!
Virtual Workshop Attendee

In the (old) normal course of things I would usually hang about after a facilitated event like this morning's, chatting to folk and making a point of thanking those who facilitated its happening.

Can you pass on my thanks? Keeping a fair share for yourself too.
Virtual Workshop Attendee

Killin Place Plan

Please pass on thanks to Sal for the work she and her team put into this! And thank you too for support throughout! Feels like the home straight!
Killin Community for GIS support for their Place Plan Story Map

Part 3 Service Improvements

In the coming year we will:

No.	Area for Improvement	Planned Action
1.	**Engagement with Community Councils to inform Local Development Planning and Decision Making**	Stakeholder Engagement Programme being devised with Park wide and Area networking opportunities being identified.
2.	**Implement findings of Audit report on Planning Application Process**	An internal audit is being carried out to gain assurance that the current arrangements for managing planning applications received by the Park Authority are adequate. The service improvement is to implement the findings of this report, due to be published at the end of Q2.
3.	**Added Value – Monitoring Report Recording**	Our monitoring reports have flagged some areas where recording the use of policies, and the added value around biodiversity, sustainable transport and climate change, needs improved so we can better capture the added value.
4.	**Determination times, which have increased due to pandemic impacts**	Identify causes of delays in determining planning applications by looking at the lifecycle of cases and develop an action program to address these issues, including improvements to paperless workflows. This will include improved performance reporting and mechanisms to target and reduce the number of legacy cases running at any one time, carried forward (see service improvements 1, 3 and 4 on page 33).
5.	**Enforcement Charter**	Review and update the Enforcement Charter, carried forward (see service improvement 2 on page 33).

Our delivery of service improvement actions from previous year

1. **Legacy Cases – partially complete** - Further develop mechanisms to target and reduce the number of legacy cases running at any one time.

   This is partially complete and will move to next year due to the 8 linked applications that are still to be determined but we recognise an issue still remains as 10 new cases were added to the list this year and 5 were cleared. However, we have set up a system of monitoring the cases, detailing the reason for the delay and how the case is being managed. At January of each year a check will be undertaken to see how many will be added and they will be added to the monitoring sheet to ensure they do not become legacy cases. This will remain a service improvement area.

2. **Planning Service Charter and Enforcement Charter - incomplete -** Review and update the Planning Service and Enforcement Charters, including how we can better engage with agents and communities.

   We are aware that the Enforcement Charter review is overdue but the focus of our staff resources has been on maintaining our essential statutory functions. We had scheduled to review the charter between Jan and Mar 2021 and the second lockdown impacted on this. We will undertake a review this year and update it to include a section on how we monitor major developments. Note that we have a dedicated monitoring officer who is currently monitoring the construction of a major development for 50 new homes at Callander.

3. **Delivering a planning service under COVID-19 restrictions – partially complete** - Continuing service delivery under exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; implementing paper-free workflows, paper free site visits etc. Reducing determination times following pandemic impacts

   This is partially complete as we have implanted paper-free workflows and site visits. See text above in the Continuous Improvement section of this report to support this work being completed. It is noted that the determination times have not been reduced so this has been carried forward as an improvement to next year.

4. **Improved performance reporting – partially complete -** Further development of ICT software/databases to help manage current caseload better and reporting on current/past performance.

   An upgraded database has been developed, extracting data from our spatial database (Uniform) and providing information on individual officer casework. This assists the managers with the allocation of caseload as it now includes more aspects of work including new applications received but not yet valid, prior approval is required applications which are awaiting a response from the applicant and enforcement cases. We have a spreadsheet which estimates performance (determination times) for the team as a whole, but further work is required to provide this data at individual case officer level.

Part 4 National Headline Indicators

A: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Headline indicators - Local Development Plan	2020-21	2019-20
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period *Requirement: less than 5 years*	4 years 3 months	3 years 3 months
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	No	No
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	No	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/ consultation commitments met during the year?	N/A	N/A

Headline indicators - Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs	2020-21	2019-20
Established housing land supply	592 units	592 units
5-year effective housing land supply programming	520 units	534 units
5-year effective land supply total capacity	578 units	-
5-year housing supply target	375 units	375 units
5-year effective housing land supply (*to one decimal place*)	6.9 Years	7.1 years
Housing approvals by financial year	46 Units	57 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	154 units	193 Units
Marketable employment land supply	14.95 ha	14.95 ha
Employment land take-up during reporting year	0 ha	0 ha

B:DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Headline Indicators – Project Planning and Decision-making	2020-21	2019-20
Project Planning • Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice • Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan • Percentage planned timescales met **Decision-making** • Application approval rate • Delegation rate • Validation - % validated on first receipt	52 app, 27.6% 0 processing agreements n/a 95.6% 97.5% 30%	66 app, 28 % 0 processing agreements n/a 92.8% 98.3% 28%

Headline Indicators - Decision-making timescales - Average Number of Weeks to Decision		
Major developments	66.4 weeks	21.1 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	22.4 weeks	12.7 weeks
Householder developments	16.3 weeks	7.4 weeks

Headline Indicators - Legacy Cases – over 1 year old		
Number cleared during reporting period	5	12
Number remaining	26	22

C: ENFORCEMENT

Headline Indicators – Enforcement	2020-21	2019-20
Time since enforcement charter reviewed (months) *Requirement: review every 2 years*	29 months	17 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	67	47
Number of breaches identified – no further actions taken	15	20
Cases closed	2	28
Notices Served	2	6
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

National Headline Indicators - Contextual Statement

This statement provides some headline commentary surrounding the notable trends in the National Headline Indicators. Our detailed statistics are in Part 5 (following on from this section) and this statement also provides comment on the stand out figures from that area.

Development Planning

This year we are again reporting that we will not to meet our target for replacing the plan within 5 years. As explained last year, this was an informed decision, approved by Members of our Planning and Access Committee and based on an assessment of the risks associated with proceeding under the old timescales. In June 2020, we updated our Development Plan Scheme and considered the impact of COVID-19 on our local development plan timescales, in line with amendments being made to the programme of work being undertaken at national level by the Scottish Government and shifted the timescale by a year.

This year the Housing Land Supply remains at a healthy 6.9 years. The approval and completion rates have declined this year due to the pandemic and construction sites being closed. However, approval was given for affordable housing at allocated housing site at Croftamie due to the government's funding programme and we saw 2 renewals at allocated vacant site in Arrochar and Balloch (20 units in total).

Development Management

The time periods for determining planning applications have not improved in 2020-21, compared with the previous year due to the pandemic. Improving performance in terms of making faster decisions has been identified again as a key service improvement. In Q1 2020-21 (April-June) performance was very low due to the pandemic and the small number of applications decided. One of the key causes was the impact on the team working from home but there were other factors including: a number of significant applications; responding to changes to temporary uses and permitted development rights; continued monitoring on a major development (the gold and silver mine at Cononish Glen, Tyndrum) and a number of enforcement cases.

For the whole year (January 2020 to March 2021) there was one vacancy in the team and one member was on maternity leave until July 2020. Figures from the Scottish Government show a significant increase in the number of weeks it is taking to determine householder determination times up from 7.4 weeks to 16.4 weeks, and local non-householder determination times (22.4 weeks) also took longer to determine. Considering reduced staffing and working from home, a drop in our determination times was inevitable this year (see case study 5 to explain the issues faced as a small authority).

The number of recorded '**legacy cases**' are 26, a slight increase on previous years (see Continuous Improvement section page 23 above for commentary on legacy cases). This remains an improvement commitment.

There were no **processing agreements** drawn up this year. We had **1 major application** this year and this took 66 weeks to determine, this was for a complex application subject to a legal agreement (see Major Application update in last year's PPF9 2019/20). The legal agreement was complex as it involved four different parties (the developer, landowner, the national park and Stirling Council), it also included four heads of terms in relation to securing two types of affordable housing, payment of financial contributions, obligations for provision and public use of the open space and requirements in respect of discharging previous Section 50 obligations and revoking previous planning permission. There were a few delays waiting for responses from various parties which are probably due to the pandemic.

Our commitment to our **pre-application service** remains high with 27.6% of applications being subject to formal pre-application enquiries. This service remains a free service. As reported previously this figure conceals that the majority of our detailed local applications (as opposed to householder, advertisement, tree works or prior notification) are subject to pre-applications and also that there are a number of pre-applications that do not result in an application as they involve proposals that would not be supported by planning policy.

Enforcement

The government advice on the relaxation of enforcement action for a range of pandemic related reasons and associated emergency legislation has resulted in a reduced level of formal action. However, the number of enquiries about breaches has increased i.e. cases where no enforcement action has been taken unless absolutely necessary. Enquiries have ranged from sitting outside, increased opening hours and takeaways. A significant amount of time has been spent handling these enquiries and monitoring sites where new outdoor seating has been permitted under the relaxed regulations. Therefore there has been a drop in any formal action with the number of notices served dropped to 2 this year which was 4 less than last year.

Following up on some of our 'live' enforcement cases has been delayed by the pandemic. We have one case where a site visit has been delayed due to the requirement for Police presence which has not been available due to redeployment. There was another case where serving a Notice was delayed because compliance would have potentially resulted in individuals having to find alternative accommodation which was judged inappropriate in a pandemic. This case has been put on hold.

Our enforcement service has operated as a shared activity across the professional development management officers – rather than by means of a dedicated enforcement office since 2016. We have 4 full time planning officers and 2 part-time officers as well as a monitoring officer, who logs enquiries and it is difficult to gauge how much time is spent on enforcement matters but this year it is likely to equate to more than 1 full time enforcement officer.

Part 5 Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Timescales	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Overall			
Major developments	**66.4 weeks**	**21.1 weeks**	**n/a -no applications**
Local developments (non-householder)	**22.2 weeks**	**11.2 weeks**	**12.0 weeks**
• Local: less than 2 months			
• Local: more than 2 months			
Householder developments	**16.3 weeks**	**7.4 weeks**	**9.1 weeks**
• Local: less than 2 months			
• Local: more than 2 months			
Housing Developments			
Major	**66.4 weeks**	**21.1 weeks**	**n/a – no applications**
Local housing developments	**25.9 weeks**	**15.2 weeks**	**15.9 weeks**
• Local: less than 2 months	**7.1 weeks**		
• Local: more than 2 months	**27.6 weeks**		
Business and Industry			
Major	**n/a – no applications**	**n/a – no applications**	**n/a – no applications**
Local business and industry developments	**23.6 weeks**	**14.9 weeks**	**8.7 weeks**
• Local: less than 2 months	**n/a**		
• Local: more than 2 months	**23.6 weeks**		
EIA Developments	**30.3 weeks**	**n/a – no applications**	**n/a – no applications**
Other Consents			
	11.7 weeks	**9.9 weeks**	**8.3 weeks**
Planning legal agreements			
• Major: average time	**66.4 weeks**	**n/a**	**n/a – no applications**
• Local: average time	**49.1 weeks**	**18.7 weeks**	**24.0 weeks**

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld					
		2020-21		2019-20		2018-2019	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	4	1	25%	8	100%	3	66.7%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	2	2	100%	0	n/a	0	n/a

Contextual Statement on Official Statistics

The commentary relating to determination times, processing agreements and enforcement is provided in the contextual statement above under National Headline Indicators.

In terms of legal agreements, there were 3 cases determined on average in 51.2 weeks, this was a drop from last year's figures of 18.7 weeks. This was partly due to the determination of a complex housing application which has a legal agreement involving four parties – further details on this is given in the commentary for the National Headline Indicators in relation to the processing of major application.
If you remove the major application, then the determination drops slightly for the other 2 local applications to 43.6 weeks. We recognise this is not in line with the target of 6 months (24 weeks) but one case was in relation to a unique set of terms in relation to a flood evacuation plan (legal agreement took 7 months) and also a straightforward affordable housing contribution which unfortunately took 9 months due to a delay with the applicant providing the correct title plan confirmation.

Of our four Local Review cases this year, we had three where the appointed officer's decision was reversed. These were small scale proposals where, for two of the cases, Members of the LRB took a balanced view to assist the support of a tourism business and a wedding venue respectively. For these the judgement may, in part, have been influenced by a pandemic response. Of the two refusal of planning permission that were appealed to the DPEA, both were dismissed.

Part 6 Workforce Information

This is a snapshot of staffing at 31 March 2020.

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service		1		3

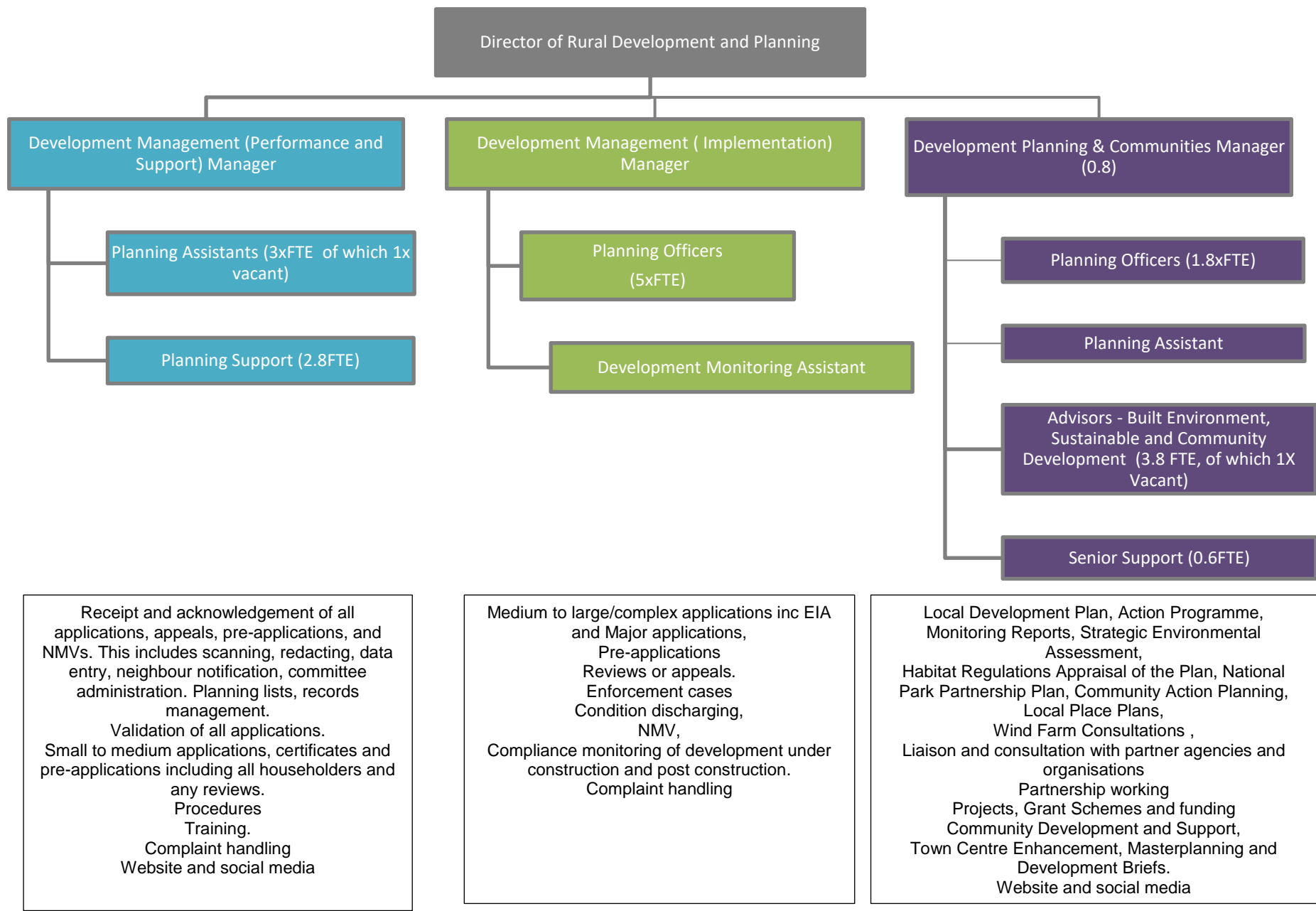| Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	1
30-39	6
40-49	8
50 and Over	6

This does not include the Chief Executive but includes the Director of Planning and Rural Development. Total staff is 20 excluding maternity leave.

RTPI Charted Staff	Headcount
Chartered Staff	11*

* The Chief Executive, Director and 3 managers and have been counted within this table as they are all qualified RTPI planners. At 31st March 2019 we had 2 vacant posts, full complement would be 12 FTE.

Vacancies - As of the 31st March 2020 the DM team was operating with 1 vacant post – a Planning Assistant and Development Planning team were also operating with 1 vacant post – Built Heritage Advisor. Built Heritage advice is being provided by arrangement with Argyll & Bute Council but currently there is a vacancy in that position also.

Tree Works Applications and TPOs – The Trees and Woodlands Advisor who sits in conservation team under a different Director handles Tree Works applications and Tree Preservation Orders. We are currently reviewing our Tree Preservation Orders and also the tree officer has prepared new Trees and Woodland Strategy which will form planning guidance to the Local Development Plan.

Director of Rural Development and Planning

Development Management (Performance and Support) Manager
- Planning Assistants (3xFTE of which 1x vacant)
- Planning Support (2.8FTE)

Development Management (Implementation) Manager
- Planning Officers (5xFTE)
- Development Monitoring Assistant

Development Planning & Communities Manager (0.8)
- Planning Officers (1.8xFTE)
- Planning Assistant
- Advisors - Built Environment, Sustainable and Community Development (3.8 FTE, of which 1X Vacant)
- Senior Support (0.6FTE)

Development Management (Performance and Support):
Receipt and acknowledgement of all applications, appeals, pre-applications, and NMVs. This includes scanning, redacting, data entry, neighbour notification, committee administration. Planning lists, records management.
Validation of all applications.
Small to medium applications, certificates and pre-applications including all householders and any reviews.
Procedures
Training.
Complaint handling
Website and social media

Development Management (Implementation):
Medium to large/complex applications inc EIA and Major applications,
Pre-applications
Reviews or appeals.
Enforcement cases
Condition discharging,
NMV,
Compliance monitoring of development under construction and post construction.
Complaint handling

Development Planning & Communities:
Local Development Plan, Action Programme, Monitoring Reports, Strategic Environmental Assessment,
Habitat Regulations Appraisal of the Plan, National Park Partnership Plan, Community Action Planning, Local Place Plans,
Wind Farm Consultations ,
Liaison and consultation with partner agencies and organisations
Partnership working
Projects, Grant Schemes and funding
Community Development and Support,
Town Centre Enhancement, Masterplanning and Development Briefs.
Website and social media

Part 7 Planning Committee Information

Committees & site visits	No. per year
Full Council committees [1]	4
Planning Committees	6
Area Committees (where relevant)	n/a
Committee site visits [2]	0
LRB [3]	3
LRB site visits	1

Notes
1. References to committees also include National Park Boards.
2. Number of site visits are those cases where were visits carried out by committees/boards.
3. This related to the number of meetings of the LRB, application numbers going to LRB are reported elsewhere.

Part 8 Key Markers

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
1	**Decision-making**: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	**Statistics presented in National Headline Indicators, Part 4.** See Contextual Statement (page 35-36) and Performance Improvement Project (page 23).
2	**Processing agreements**: • offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications; and • availability publicised on website	See **Culture of Continuous Improvement page 23**, where a review was undertaken on processing agreements. We have not used any processing agreements this year. The availability of processing agreements is mentioned on our website: https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/planning/planning-applications/make-an-application/helpful-resources/planning-processing-agreements/
3	**Early collaboration** with applicants and consultees • availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and • clear and proportionate requests for supporting information	**Case Study 1 – Leadership Centre (page 8)** demonstrates our clear and proportionate request for information and importance of early pre-application discussions. **Case study 2 – Visitor Facilities (page 10)** demonstrates early collaboration with applicants and consultees regarding new car parking and funding bids and also engagement with the communities. Free pre-application advice service offered (see page 14 for further info) and there is a mini case study about Luss Distillery on page 15 that demonstrates how well this process works in ensuring a smooth application process.
4	**Legal agreements**: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	We had 3 applications determined this year involving legal agreements taking an average of 54.9 weeks (13 months) (see commentary on official statistics on page 37). We have a robust internal procedure in place involving our own legal team and our external solicitors to try to resolve under 6 months.
5	**Enforcement charter** updated / re-published within last 2 years	See National Headline Indicator – Enforcement Charter expired in October 2020. Due to staff resources during the lockdown we have been unable to update this – see page 31 where we report on our service improvements. Current version is on the website: http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Planning_20181029_Agenda9_Appendix-1_Enforcement-Charter-2018.pdf
6	**Continuous improvement**: • show progress/improvement in	We have reported successes this year partially completing 3 of our 4 service improvements (see Part 3 – Service Improvements pages 31) including improved case load reporting.

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
	relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	We have developed new ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments for the forthcoming year, reflecting on current performance and post pandemic recovery – see page 30.
7	**Local development plan** less than 5 years since adoption	Our Local Development Plan remains current 2017-2021 and is now 4 years and 3 months old at March 2021.
8	**Development plan scheme** – next LDP: • on course for adoption within 5 year cycle; and • project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	Our **Development Plan Scheme 2020** (see page 12) explains why we are not on course for adoption of the next LDP within 5 years of the current plan given we undertook a review of the plan's strategy (which remains robust) and we are awaiting the new regulations to enable us to produce a 10 year plan under the new Planning Act. In addition, due to COVID-19 pandemic the next plan will be delayed further. A revised Development Plan Scheme was published in 2021 in light of COVID and announcements by Scottish Government regarding progress of NPF4.
9	**Elected members engaged early** (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – *if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year*	In 2020/21 we did not undertake any early development plan preparation. However, we have a rolling programme (6 monthly) of updating our Action Programme and yearly Monitoring Report which are presented to Committee then we keep elected members engaged in the development plan delivery. We also continue to engage and gather information from our communities and stakeholders through our work on Community Place Plans (Case Study 4 – page 18) and the Strathard Framework (Case Study 3 - page 16). Our Members have been involved in some of the work and one member was a note taker at a recent workshop.
10	**Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early** (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – *if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year* **including industry, agencies and Scottish Government*	See section Quality of Service and Engagement section page 13 regarding the early work we are doing in relation to community stakeholder engagement to inform our next LDP.
11	**Regular and proportionate policy advice** produced on information required to support applications.	We have continued with our successful Development Planning Clinic (reported in PPF8) where Development Management officers are able to bring cases and get early policy advice that is then passed on to the applicant or the person who made the pre-application enquiry. This is also highlighted in our case studies – **Case study 1 and 2** – but also in the smaller cases highlighted in **Quality of Outcomes** section page 6 which gives a summary of our outcomes from our Monitoring report 2020.
12	**Corporate working across services** to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for	We continue to work closely with all four local authorities, but in particular Argyll and Bute Council and Stirling Council. We continue to regularly attend Housing Forum meetings, and protocols in relation to affordable housing contributions remain in place.

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
	example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	Furthermore **Case Study 3** (page 16) demonstrates corporate working with an internal project team working on the Strathard Framework and helping to run the virtual engagement exercise. We also regularly have meetings with the Conservation team (ecology, landscape and tree advisors) to prioritise the areas requiring internal advice input.
13	**Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge** between authorities	This is set out in both the Governance section has lots of examples of sharing good practice, skills and knowledge (see pages 21-24). The team are also actively involved in the Knowledge Hub.
14	**Stalled sites / legacy cases**: conclusion or withdrawal planning applications more than one-year-old (from the same time last year).	We had hoped to target legacy cases this year but unfortunately due to the pandemic the figure has not been reduced and in deed as increased and also we have had continuing issues with the 7 linked cases in terms of 'old' titles regarding for estate land on Sasines. This is set out in the **Culture of Continuous Improvement section** (page 23) provides an update on Legacy Cases in detail.
15	**Developer contributions**: clear and proportionate expectations • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions	As explained in the Quality of Service and Engagement section page 14, we have up to date Developer Contributions guidance and Housing guidance with clear expectations for both monetary and non-monetary contributions. **Case Study 1, leadership centre** (page 8) explains how we work to achieve monetary and non-monetary contributions. Clear and proportionate expectations of Developer Contributions are set out in pre-application discussions.