

Minister for Local Government Empowerment and
Planning
Ministear airson Cumhachdachadh is Dealbhachadh
Riaghaltas Ionadail
Joe FitzPatrick MSP
Joe Mac Giolla Phádraig BPA



Peter Hessest
Chief Executive
West Dunbartonshire Council

20 October 2023

Dear Peter Hessest,

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's twelfth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Across the country, performance against the key markers continues to be stable and there has been little variation in the overall total of green, amber and red markings awarded this reporting period compared with previous periods. It is clear that each of you continue to put in considerable effort to ensuring our planning system continues to run efficiently. I have been particularly pleased to see there has been a marked improvement on speed of determination for major applications across some authorities.

Resourcing remains a key priority which I will continue to discuss with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, which I jointly chair with COSLA. I also have asked officials to bring different parties together to talk about resourcing in the autumn, to identify practical solutions. We need options that work for all sectors, and I think it would be really beneficial to discuss a variety of issues including full cost recovery, the local setting of fees, charges for additional services and approaches which could enable authorities to access the skills and expertise at the time they require.

Finally, I am delighted that we have recently announced the appointment of the National Planning Improvement Champion (NPIC), Craig McLaren, who took up this new post in early September. Craig will play a pivotal role in supporting improvement and will also be looking at how we can improve the way we measure and assess the performance of the planning system in the future.

If you would like to discuss any of the markings awarded below, please contact us at chief.planner@gov.scot and a member of the team will be happy to discuss them with you.

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JOE FITZPATRICK

CC: Pamela Clifford, Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager

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PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2022-23

Name of planning authority: **West Dunbartonshire Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Amber	<p>Major Applications Your average timescale is 13.4 weeks which is slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 39.5 weeks as well as within the statutory timescale. RAG = Green</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your average timescale is 13.1 weeks which is slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 14.4 weeks. RAG = Amber</p> <p>Householder Applications Your average timescale is 9.8 weeks which is slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 8.9 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>
2	Processing agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>It is noted that instead of offering processing agreements you offer a pre-application framework process instead which is used for major or more complex developments. The framework provides a pre-application service which is different to your general pre-application service. RAG = Green</p> <p>You have provided a link in your PPF which shows this process highlighted and publicised on your website. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	Green	<p>You continue to offer pre-application discussions for all applications, either general pre-application advice service for smaller and less complex proposals or through the pre-application framework for larger and complex proposals. RAG = Green</p> <p>Your pre-application service sets out what supporting information is required at each stage of the process. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	Green	Your average timescale for applications with legal agreement is 12.4 weeks which is faster than the Scottish average of 41.1 weeks. Your average is based on one application and you did not determine any applications in the previous reporting period for comparison.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was updated in December which is within the last 2 years.

6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Green	You completed 3 out of 10 improvement commitments with a further 2 partially completed with elements ongoing, a further 3 ongoing and 2 with limited progress. You have identified a further 10 commitments for the next reporting year and provided clear reasoning and benefit in carrying out each one.
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Red	Your LDP is over 5 years old having been adopted in 2010. It is noted however that you were due to adopt your next LDP in 2020 but that has been subsequently delayed and now formally will not to be adopted due to Scottish Ministers Direction.
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Green	You have set out that you expect to start work on a new LDP in the coming reporting period and this will be set out in a future Development Plan Scheme.
9 & 10	LDP Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation. 	N/A	You have not carried out any LDP engagement as you await to start preparation on your new LDP in the coming reporting period.
11	Policy Advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of relevant and up to date policy advice 	Green	You have continued to update your supplementary guidance including Green Network and Green Infrastructure as well as producing draft guidance documents that will be consulted on during the next reporting period.
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	Green	You have highlighted clearly how you undertake corporate working across services in Case Study 9. You have set out how you are involved in a cross-service group which involves representatives from Regeneration, Asset Management and Transport. You also work closely with Housing colleagues on policy and delivery issues such as the Local Housing Strategy.
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	You have indicated how you continue to share good practice between authorities including being the Senior Vice Chair of the HOPS Executive as well as being an active member in various other sub-committees. You have also undertaken PPF peer review exercise with Aberdeen City Council as well as continuing to be actively involved in the ClydePlan and Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Market Partnership which involves 8 authorities across the Glasgow Region.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	You have cleared 4 cases during the reporting period, 1 less than last year. The number of cases remaining is 7 which is the same as last year.
15	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and in pre-application discussions 	Amber	<p>You set out information relating to developer contributions in supplementary guidance including the new guidance on Green Infrastructure and Network.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>It is not clear from your report how developer contributions are set out during the the pre-application stage.</p> <p>RAG = Red</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Performance against Key Markers

Marker		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23
1	Decision making timescales										
2	Processing agreements										
3	Early collaboration										
4	Legal agreements										
5	Enforcement charter										
6	Continuous improvement										
7	Local development plan										
8	Development plan scheme										
9 & 10	LDP Engagement	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications										
12	Corporate working across services										
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge										
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases										
15	Developer contributions										

Overall Markings (total numbers for red, amber and green)

2012-13	1	6	6
2013-14	1	2	10
2014-15	2	2	9
2015-16	1	5	7
2016-17	1	4	10
2017-18	1	5	9
2018-19	2	3	8
2019-20	2	3	8
2020-21	1	3	9
2021-22	1	0	13
2022-23	1	2	10

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	2022-23 Scottish Average
Major Development	32.4	19.8	24.6	23.4	18.3	28.5	14.8	11.2	9.6	13.4	39.5
Local (Non-Householder) Development	15.2	10.5	10.7	10.0	11.8	14.4	16.0	12.6	13.0	13.1	14.4
Householder Development	7.5	6.8	7.3	6.8	7.0	8.6	12.7	9.6	8.6	9.8	8.9