

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory

Planning Committee: 27 February 2018

Subject: Planning Performance Framework 2017-18

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the recent comments received from the Scottish Government and the peer review regarding the Planning Performance Framework submitted by this Council for 2017-18.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** That the Committee notes the content of this report and the comments received from the Scottish Government and peer reviewer.

3. Background

- 3.1** The annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of July 2018 for assessment by the Scottish Government and feedback was received in January 2019. The Scottish Government have assessed the Planning Performance Framework against a set of performance markers agreed by the High Level Group of Planning Performance and is seen as a measure of continuous improvement. The Performance Markers give an indication of good performance, good practice and help to identify priority areas for improvement action. A peer review of the reports was also undertaken in the SOLACE Groups (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). West Dunbartonshire is in the SOLACE group with East Dunbartonshire, Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council, Dundee, Aberdeen City and Falkirk Councils. This year the Council were paired with Falkirk Council for the peer review.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The PPF report outlined our performance and demonstrated our achievements, actions and improvements in 2017-18 and is contained in Appendix 1. The general format of the report was around defining and measuring a high quality planning service and it was assessed through quality of outcomes, quality of service and engagement, governance and culture of continuous improvement. The report was based on case studies in order to showcase good performance, good practice and the use of innovative ideas.

- 4.2** The Minister for Local Government, Planning and Housing Mr Kevin Stewart within the feedback report has indicated that the Planning Bill recently passed the second stage of parliamentary consideration during which the Local Government and Communities Committee voted to remove the proposed provisions on planning performance, provisions to make training for elected members mandatory and the existing penalty clause provisions. It is expected that Stage 3 of the bill process will begin in early 2019. He has indicated that Ministers continue to see an important connection between performance and fees and any proposals to increase fees will raise applicant's expectations of an efficient and effective service. He has indicated that the Scottish Government will continue to liaise with COSLA, SOLACE and Heads of Planning Scotland on matters of the Bill's implementation and planning performance measures going forward.
- 4.3** The assessment of the annual Planning Performance Framework is based on performance markers which are rated green, amber or red. These ratings are based on the evidence provided within the Planning Performance Framework reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided a 'red' marking has been allocated. This Council received 9 green performance markers, 5 amber and 1 red marker. The feedback report is contained in Appendix 2. Last year, 10 green, 4 amber and 1 red markers were received. The green markers for decision making, legacy cases and developer contributions are now amber and early collaboration and legal agreements now green. Green performance markers were received this year for processing agreements, early collaboration with applicants and consultees, legal agreements, enforcement charter, elected members and cross sector stakeholders engaged early in the development plan preparation. Regular and proportionate policy advice, corporate working across services, sharing good practice, skills and knowledge were also given green markers. Strong evidence was demonstrated regarding collaborative working with other local authorities including Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to share experiences of major development applications, working with Scottish Canals and Clydeplan. Evidence of good practice was the Kings Cross Collaborative Study trip. The Main Issues report published in April 2017 included evidence of a range of pre- Main Issues Report stakeholder engagement and strong elected member engagement. Evidence of proportionate policy advice was demonstrated in the New Dumbarton Football Stadium case study, conservation area and multiple policy guidance documents.
- 4.4** This year the "amber" performance markers related to decision making, continuous improvement, legacy cases, developer contributions and the development plan scheme. An overall amber was received for decision making: a green marker was received for the timescale for major applications which was 18.3 weeks faster than the previous year and faster than the Scottish average of 33.6 weeks. A green marker was also received for householder applications which were 7 weeks and faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. The local applications (non-householder) was 11.8 weeks and slower than the Scottish average of 10.7 weeks resulting in a red marker but an overall amber marker for decision making. The continuous improvement marker was also amber as the Local Development Plan was out

of date and will not be replaced in the next reporting period, together with the decision making timescales and several legacy cases to be cleared. Within this marker it was acknowledged that 8 out of 15 improvement commitments had been completed with those remaining to be completed over the next reporting year. It was acknowledged that a range of commitments was identified for the next reporting year.

4.5 The only red marker was received for the Local Development Plan. The Scottish Government noted that the Local Development Plan had been abandoned and preparation had commenced on a new plan and good progress was being made. The adopted Local Plan was 8 years old at the end of the reporting period. The Council took a final decision on 27 April 2016 not to accept the Local Development Plan Examination Report recommended modification in respect of including the Duntiglennan Fields site in Clydebank as a housing development opportunity. The Scottish Ministers' Direction has resulted in the Local Development Plan retaining Proposed Plan status and will remain unadopted.

4.6 The peer review of the Planning Performance Framework carried out by Falkirk Council commented that it was a good and interesting read. Well presented, showcasing lots of interesting projects and initiatives which is impressive for a small authority. Putting in the service structure at the beginning is helpful and the use of testimonies from stakeholders is good. They particularly thought the case study on the Place and Design Panel was interesting. Suggestions to strengthen next year's Planning Performance Framework report included providing more context to the case studies, reducing the length of the case studies and demonstrating the difference of the Place and Design Panel has made. More evidence of innovation in the consultation process of the Local Development Plan and attempts to reach wider audiences e.g. through social media is suggested. A copy of the peer review is contained in Appendix 3. Officers from Falkirk Council also visited the Council in November 2018 to share good practice and they also got a tour of the new Council office at Church Street and the proposed Dumbarton Town Centre Conservation Area. A return visit to Falkirk Council area is planned for March/April 2019.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 None.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There are no risk issues.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 It is not considered that the report or recommendations raise any equalities issues.

8.2 None.

9. Consultation

9.1 No consultation was necessary for the preparation of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The content of this report fully supports the Council's Strategic Priorities.

Peter Hessett
Strategic Lead - Regulatory
Date: 4th February 2019

Person to Contact: Pamela Clifford, Planning & Building Standards Manager,
Email: pamela.clifford@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1: Planning Performance Framework 2017-18
Appendix 2: Performance Markers Report 2017-18
Appendix 3: Peer Review September 2018

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All