

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by the Strategic Lead – Regulatory**

**Planning Committee: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

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**Subject: Planning Performance Framework 2018-19**

#### **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 2018-19.

#### **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 2019 and feedback was received in February 2020. The Scottish Government have assessed the Planning Performance Framework against a set of performance markers and it 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, Glasgow City, Dundee, Aberdeen City and Falkirk Councils. This year the Council were paired with Edinburgh City Council for the peer review.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** The PPF report outlined our performance and demonstrated our achievements, actions and improvements in 2018-19 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 in the feedback report indicated that good progress continues to be made by

authorities and, although there was a small drop in the number of green ratings awarded this year, there remains some variation across some authorities and markers.

- 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 8 green performance markers, 3 amber and 2 red markers. The feedback report is contained in Appendix 2 and it is a much condensed version than previous years. Last year, 9 green, 5 amber and 1 red markers were received. Green performance markers were received this year for processing agreements, early collaboration with applicants and consultees, legal agreements, enforcement charter, regular and proportionate policy advice, corporate working across services and sharing good practice, skills and knowledge. An Amber marking was given for continuous improvement as the Local Development Plan was out of date and will not be replaced in the next reporting period, the timescales for dealing with applications were slower than the previous year and there were still several legacy cases to be determined. However 8 out of 15 improvement commitments were completed with the majority remaining to be completed over the next reporting year. A good range of commitments were identified for the 2019-20 reporting year. Amber marking was also given to the development plan scheme as the Development Plan Scheme (September 2018) suggests adoption in 2020 and this timescale is on track to be achieved.
- 4.4** The two red markers were for the Local Development Plan which is 9 years old at the end of the reporting period and for decision making. The timescales for major applications was 28.5 weeks which was slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 32.5 weeks. Householder applications timescales were 8.6 weeks slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 7.2 weeks. For local development the timescale was 14.4 weeks slower than the Scottish average of 10.7 weeks. The Development Management team is a small team and has faced staffing and support administration issues over this year. This has had a major impact on processing times for applications together with the substantial increase in workload. New planning and support officers have been recruited and planning and technical processes reviewed to assist in improved performance levels.
- 4.5** The peer review of the Planning Performance Framework was carried out by Edinburgh City Council who indicated that it is comprehensive and includes a good selection of case studies which are both interesting and cover a significant breadth of important topics including heritage regeneration, redevelopment of contaminated sites, areas of landscape value, regeneration and affordable housing. This demonstrates to both developers and members of the public the significant variation in work which the Council successfully handles on a regular basis. The inclusion of a summary on how the Place and

Design Panel has developed clearly demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving the quality of development through seeking the input of stakeholders. The example of Queens Quay 'One year on' allows members of the public, who are perhaps not familiar with how larger scale developments work, to see the pace of development and how it progresses.

- 4.6** The peer review also made suggestions to strengthen next year's Planning Performance Framework. This includes using less text, structure the case studies around the template provided in the Planning Performance guidance, and providing more information on how the link is made between planning and strategic regeneration. A copy of the peer review is contained in Appendix 3. Officers from Edinburgh City Council also visited the Council in January 2020 to share good practice and they commented that it was clear that there is a strong sense of collaborative working within the planning service, which created a good team ethos where sharing experience and knowledge was common. A return visit to Edinburgh City Council area is planned for Summer 2020.

## **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.

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**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Planning Performance Framework 2018-19  
Appendix 2: Performance Markers Report 2018-19  
Appendix 3: Peer Review February 2020

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All