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Ms Joyce White OBE
Chief Executive
West Dunbartonshire Council
10 January 2019

Dear Ms White OBE

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FEEDBACK 2017/18

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's 7th PPF Report for the period April 2017 to March 2018. Considerable progress has been made since the introduction of the Planning Performance Framework and key markers, although performance still remains variable over some authorities and markers.

As you may be aware, the Planning Bill has recently passed through 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. We expect Stage 3 of the bill process to begin in the new year.

Whatever the outcome of the Planning Bill, I believe now is the time to look again at how we measure the performance of the planning system. The High Level Group on Planning Performance recently met to discuss performance measurement and other improvements. I very much hope that we can continue to support ongoing improvements in our planning service and further demonstrate the value which the planning system can add to people's lives. Ministers see an important connection between performance and fees and I am aware that any proposals to increase fees will raise applicants' expectations of an efficient and effective service.

We need to be able to measure performance to provide that crucial evidence to support any increases in fees, to help ensure that authorities are appropriately resourced to deliver on our ambitions. With this in mind, we 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.

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

Kind Regards



KEVIN STEWART

CC: Ms Pamela Clifford, Manager of Planning

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2017-18

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 timescales of 18.3 weeks are faster than the previous year and faster than the Scottish average of 33.6 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescales of 11.8 weeks are slower than the previous year and are slower than the Scottish average of 10.7 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescales of 7.0 weeks are slower than the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. However, this is faster than the statutory timescale of 8 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>
2	<p>Processing agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>Processing agreements are offered to all applicants of major development and important local development. Evidence of offering in case study on Dumbarton Football Club provided. RAG = Green</p> <p>Processing agreement information is available through your website. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <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 provide a pre-application advice service which is promoted through the website, guidance and by staff engaging with prospective applicants. RAG = Green</p> <p>You provide case study evidence, such as one on Queens Quay, of requests from consultees or the planning service regarding site specific issues being clear and proportionate to the applicant. 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 timescales for determining local applications with legal agreements is faster than last year and this year's Scottish average. The experience of processing these legal agreements, by requiring a greenspace contribution towards a residential development, fed into the publication of a planning guidance document.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was 1 month old at the end of the reporting period.
6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	Your LDP is out of date and will not be replaced in the next reporting period. Except major applications, your timescales for dealing with applications have slowed from last year and there are several legacy cases to be cleared. RAG = Amber You have completed 8 out of 15 of your improvement commitments with the majority remaining to be completed over the next reporting year. You have identified a range of commitments for the next reporting year. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Amber
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Red	Your LDP was 8 years old at the end of the reporting period. It is noted that you have abandoned the replacement and commenced preparation of a new plan. You are making progress on this.
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and • project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Amber	Your next LDP is not on track for adoption within the five year cycle for the reason noted above. RAG = Red Your most recent development plan scheme (September 2018) suggests adoption in 2020. Your timescales to date have been met. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Amber
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	Green	Your Main issues report includes evidence of elected member engagement through two workshops.
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	Green	Your Main issues report was published in April 2017. The report includes evidence of range of Pre-MIR stakeholder engagement in MIR case study including 7 formal consultation events.
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	Green	Evidence from the New Dumbarton Football Stadium case study demonstrates proportionate policy advice being provided to applicants. You are preparing three conservation area guidance documents and multiple guidance documents for LDP2, following the publication of the main issues report.
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	Your report shows how several protocols have been written for customer facing aspects of development management. Elsewhere, case studies demonstrate your work with Scottish Canals and with neighbouring councils as part of the Clyde Plan.

13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	There is evidence of good practice in the Kings Cross Collaborative Study trip case study. Your report identifies working with other local authorities including Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park to share experiences of major development applications.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Amber	You have cleared 7 cases during the reporting year, with 8 cases still awaiting conclusion. Based on this and last year's figures, 7 reached legacy status during the reporting year. We note that you are in contact with the applicants and look forward to further progress.
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	Developer contributions are set out in relation to green network. A more robust system has been implemented for developer contributions during the reporting year. RAG = Green It is not clear from the report whether developer contributions are discussed during pre-application discussions. RAG = Red Overall RAG = Amber

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
Performance against Key Markers

Marker		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
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	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	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

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2017-18 Scottish Average
Major Development	19.2	32.4	19.8	24.6	23.4	18.3	33.6
Local (Non-Householder) Development	12.3	15.2	10.5	10.7	10.0	11.8	10.7
Householder Development	7.3	7.5	6.8	7.3	6.8	7.0	7.3