

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by the Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health  
Manager****Planning Committee: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

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**Subject: Planning Performance Framework 2021-22****1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To inform the Committee of the recent comments received from the Scottish Government regarding the Planning Performance Framework submitted by this Council for 2021-22.

**2. Recommendations**

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

**3. Background**

- 3.1** This year the annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2022, with an extension of time given to all Councils due to a delay in the issuing of national statistics. The feedback on individual Planning Performance Reports was received from the Scottish Government in December 2022. 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. This year, a peer review of the Planning Performance Framework was undertaken with Aberdeen City Council. This was undertaken online over 2 days in November 2022.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** The PPF report outlined our performance and demonstrated our achievements, actions and improvements in 2021-22. This year we presented the Planning Performance Framework in an online storymap format (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/5844998c7c77438186a9f018616dea8c8>). The structure and format of the report remained consistent from previous years focused on defining and measuring a high quality planning service and assessed through quality of outcomes, quality of service and engagement, governance, and culture of continuous improvement. The Framework report

included case studies in order to showcase good performance, good practice and the use of innovative ideas.

- 4.2** The Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth (Mr Tom Arthur) in the feedback report recognised that the reporting period continued to present challenges for people working within planning, in the development sector and across Scotland's communities. Performance had remained relatively stable and that this is testament to the hard work and flexibility of authorities during challenging times. Ensuring a system is appropriately resourced is key to improving the performance of planning, and he recognised why in April 2022 the biggest change to planning fees in 8 years was implemented with fees for most types of development increasing by between 25% and 50%. He indicated that he expected this additional money to be invested in delivering improvements in Planning Services. He also committed to working with Heads of Planning and COSLA to identify how to move planning application fees closer to covering full cost of their determination. The Minister also recognised that resourcing is about more than just money and having a pipeline of knowledgeable and skilled planners is essential to deliver the ambitions set out in the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). This is why he supports the Royal Town Planning Institute and Heads of Planning Scotland's Future Planners Project which looks at proposals to increase the numbers of people entering the planning profession. Work by the Scottish Government is progressing on the introduction of mandatory training for elected members in the planning system, the implementation of statutory annual reports by planning authorities, and the appointment of a Planning Improvement Coordinator for Scotland.
- 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 is allocated. This year the Council saw a further improvement in the performance markers with 14 green performance markers, and only one red marker compared to the previous year of 9 green performance markers, 3 amber markers and 1 red marker(2 markers in the previous reporting period where exempt.) The feedback report is contained in Appendix 1. 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, the conclusion of legacy cases, developer contributions and sharing good practice, skills and knowledge, decision making, Local Development Plan engagement, continuous improvement and the Development Plan Scheme.
- 4.4** In reporting year 2021-22, the timescales for dealing with major applications of 9.6 weeks is faster than the previous year and much faster than the Scottish average of 44.6 weeks. The average timescales of 13 weeks for local applications was slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 13.5 weeks and the average timescales for householder applications of 8.6 weeks is faster than the previous year and faster than the

Scottish average of 8.7 weeks. A good range of service improvement commitments were identified for the forthcoming 2022-23 reporting year. The high number of green markers received this year is due to the hard work and commitment of the Planning staff members and support of Elected Members during a challenging year in terms of staff resources.

- 4.5** The one red marker was for the Local Development Plan. The current adopted Plan was 12 years old at the end of the Planning Performance Framework reporting period. As reported in the Development Plan Update report to this Committee, the replacement plan (LDP2) has been through Examination and the officers are still considering a change to the Plan required by a Scottish Ministers Direction which could have legal implications, and that has delayed the adoption of a more up-to-date Plan. Preliminary work has commenced on LDP3, whilst new LDP regulations and guidance is awaited from the Scottish Government. It is expected that this will be issued in Spring 2023.

## **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.

## **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.

**Pamela Clifford**

**Planning, Building Standards and Environmental Health Manager**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

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**Person to Contact:** Pamela Clifford, Planning & Building Standards Manager,  
Email: [pamela.clifford@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:pamela.clifford@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Performance Markers Report 2021-22

**Background Papers:** West Dunbartonshire Council Planning Performance Framework report for 2021-22  
(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/5844998c7c77438186a9f018616deac8>)

**Wards Affected:** All