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Aubrey Fawcett
Chief Executive
Inverclyde Council

17 December 2020

Dear Aubrey,

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FEEDBACK 2019-20

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's ninth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2019 to March 2020.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for enabling planning services to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been a difficult year for so many, and our planning system has a vital role to play in Scotland's green recovery. The impact which the pandemic has had, has demonstrated how valuable planning is from ensuring that businesses can operate flexibly to the contribution that it can make to the Places that are so important for our communities in terms of having access to the services they need, to greenspace and other areas where families can walk, wheel and cycle safely.

Turning to the 2019-20 PPF reporting year, I believe that good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities. Overall, there has been an increase in the number of green ratings awarded this year, with a subsequent reduction in red ratings, however, there remains some variation across some authorities and markers. I have been particularly pleased to see improvements in the speed of determination of major planning applications in some authorities.

When I wrote about performance reporting last year, I indicated that a consultation on Planning Performance and Fees was underway, including preparations for the new performance arrangements being introduced through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; with our intention at that time being that the proposed changes would be implemented in Summer 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has required a rethink about the timing and a wider reprioritisation of our work programme.

I would like to reassure you that, while we have paused the changes to the fees and performance legislation, I am committed to ensuring that planning authorities are properly resourced and that planning fee levels are proportionate. We will pick this up again when the timing is more appropriate.



Finally, although the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted on the tail end of the 2019-20 reporting year, I appreciate the impacts on service delivery will show through more in the 2020-21 reporting year. The Planning statistics for the first 6 months of the reporting year are due to be published in January, which will provide the first indications of how the pandemic has affected the ability of authorities to determine applications. I would like to reassure you that I will consider, in liaison with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, how next year's reports will be assessed, so that authorities are not unfairly criticised due to circumstances outwith their control. It could also provide an opportunity to recognise the vital actions taken by planning authorities to maintain the planning system and its contribution to recovery.

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.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN STEWART

CC: Alan Williamson, David Ashman & Stuart Jamieson

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2019-20

Name of planning authority: **Inverclyde 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 28.6 weeks are slower than the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 33.5 weeks. RAG = Amber</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescales of 9.7 weeks are slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 10.9 weeks. RAG = Amber</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescales of 6.8 weeks are the same as the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks and the statutory timescale. 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>You encourage processing agreements for all major developments. 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 availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</p>	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 state the requirements for additional information in the development management Charter and in the guidance on developer contributions. 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	There was two applications which were subject to a legal agreement. The average timescale for these two applications was 26.9 weeks which is faster than the Scottish Average.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was 17 months old at the end of the reporting year.
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 and enforcement charter are up-to-date. Application timescales are slower than last year but are faster than the national average. You managed to clear 18 legacy cases however, the total number of legacy cases has only reduced slightly. RAG = Amber You have completed 3 out of 5 of your improvement commitments with the remaining to be continued over the next reporting year. You identified a good range of improvement commitments for the coming year. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Amber
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your LDP was 7 months old at the end of the reporting year.
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 	Green	Your Development Plan Scheme was published in October 2019 which did not include a timeline for replacing your LPD as the new Development Planning regulations have not yet been published. RAG = Green The replacement of your LDP will be project planned to ensure delivery in accordance with your Development Plan Scheme. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Green
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
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>	N/A	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	Green	LDP guidance has recently been adopted for a range of topics, including new guidance on priority places, energy and enabling development. Information required to support applications is included in your Development Management Charter.
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact	Green	You have provided some examples of areas where you have worked with other council services such as with Roads on active travel behaviour change and infrastructure projects. You also meet regularly with Housing to monitor progress on RSL developments.

	arrangements; joint pre-application advice)		
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	You have provided a case study on how you have engaged with other councils during the reporting period, this includes through the West of Scotland Benchmarking Group which meets quarterly. Discussions have included pre-application discussion charges, fees, PPF, SAQP, Scottish Water MOU and Road Parking Standards. You also attended a one day visits to the Whitelee Windfarm and Greenock Town Centre.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Red	You have cleared 18 cases during the reporting year, with 31 cases still awaiting conclusion. It is clear that applications are still reaching legacy cases.
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 	Green	<p>Planning guidance relating to the current LDP was recently adopted in relation to developer contributions although it is noted that you have limited requirements for developer contributions. RAG = Green</p> <p>Your pre-application discussions set out the expectations for developer contributions for applicants. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Performance against Key Markers

Marker		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
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		N/A	N/A	N/A
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	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	3	5	5
2013-14	1	5	7
2014-15	0	1	12
2015-16	0	3	10
2016-17	0	3	12
2017-18	0	1	12
2018-19	1	0	12
2019-20	1	2	10

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	2019-20 Scottish Average
Major Development	26.0	-	12.1	45.1	16.1	28.5	22.2	28.6	33.5
Local (Non-Householder) Development	8.8	8.0	7.9	7.5	9.2	8.3	9.4	9.7	10.9
Householder Development	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.4	6.8	6.8	7.3