

# Planning Performance Framework 2017-2018

# 7



WORKING WITH PARTNERS  
AND COMMUNITIES TO  
MAKE LIFE BETTER





# Our People, Our Place, Our Future



**Foreword by  
Councillor Brian McGinley  
Portfolio holder for  
Economic Development,  
Tourism and Leisure**

Welcome to South Ayrshire's seventh Planning Performance Framework.

Our people and our places make South Ayrshire a great place to live, work and visit. The Council and its partners have a clear and ambitious vision of what we want to achieve and we have cultivated the leadership and determination to bring these plans to life.

As a Council, we want South Ayrshire to be the best it can be and for all people and places to have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

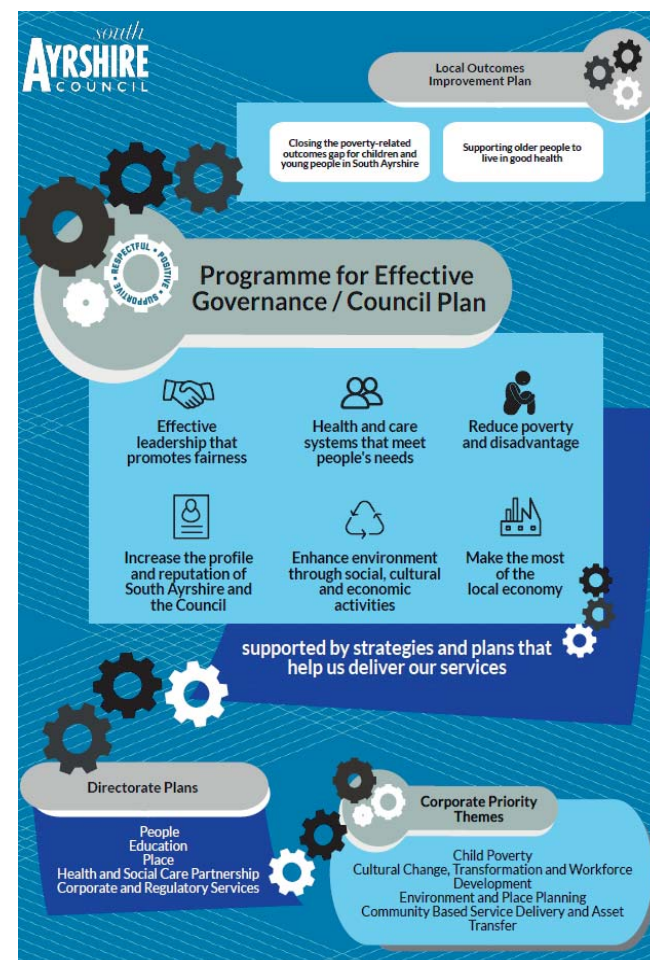
Our Council Plan 2018-2022 sets out the Council's vision for the next four years, with a focus on 'Our People, Our Place' as a framework for good governance. It details the high-level objectives and outcomes we want to achieve for our people and places by 2022.

## The strategic objectives are:

- **Effective leadership that promotes fairness;**
- **Reducing poverty and disadvantage;**
- **Promoting health and care systems that meet people's needs;**
- **Making the most of the local economy; Increase the profile and reputation of South Ayrshire and the Council; and**
- **Enhancing the environment through social, cultural and economic activities.**

The Planning Service performs a major role in progressing each of these strategic objectives through its plans, guidance and adopted procedures. By placing our people and places' at the centre of our service delivery we constantly drive towards a sustainable environment that is healthy, facilitative and empowering.

I personally commend this report to you and attest to the veracity of its declarations and commitments.





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# Introduction

The Planning performance Framework provides an opportunity for the Planning Authority to provide an annual report of the Planning Service, reflect on our performance during 2017/18 and identify service improvements for 2018/19.

Our Performance Markers Report for 2016/17 reflected a year of improvements which, whilst this may not have continued in all areas in the current PPF, the Framework demonstrates that a Planning Service will always see slight variations in service delivery, but the case studies and assessment timeframes will attest to the fact that the service remains robust and credible.

The feedback received specifically highlighted that we needed to engage with Elected Members early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation and also provide supplementary guidance in developer contributions for education, which are aspects that we have specifically focussed on during 2017/18 and which are addressed in this year's report.

In preparing PPF 7, we have involved all Planning Service staff in discussions as to the content and format. The Portfolio holder has been a significant supporter in the work of service, and presented the Performance Markers Report 2016/17 to Panel, commending the work of the department.



## Development Planning

Following early consultation (undertaken in conjunction with Community Planning and Community Justice teams) at the initiation of the review of South Ayrshire Council's Local Development Plan (LDP1), formal engagement and consultation on the Main Issues Report (MIR) for LDP2 has been completed. Over 400 individuals and organisations made comment on the MIR, with extensive press coverage helping to raise the profile of the ideas and issues it contained for discussion.

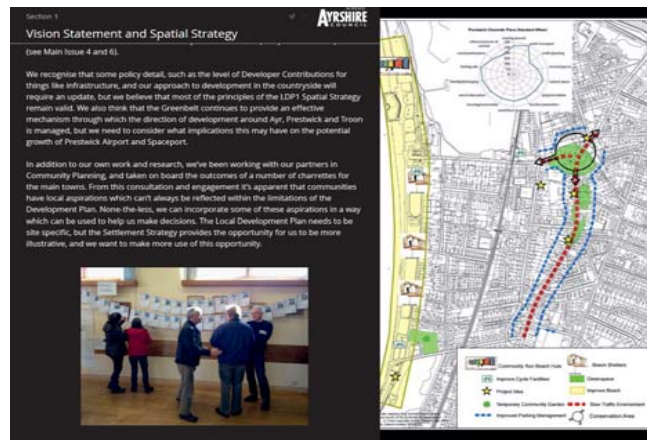
Bespoke, tailored consultation events were held to encourage a wider range of participation, using traditional and innovative digital/online methodology. The dataset of 'interested individuals' wishing to be directly notified of the progress of LDP2 preparation has witnessed significant growth as a consequence of the MIR consultation.



South Ayrshire Youth Forum

The Development Plan Scheme, including consultation arrangements, has been updated and published to take account of necessary revised timescales. These amendments clarify revisions and will ensure the Council will be in a position to adopt the new LDP by the end of 2019 (LDP1 was adopted in 2014, and the issue specific Town Centre and Retail LDP was adopted in 2017).

The adopted development plan is supported by an extensive range of Supplementary Guidance and general guidance, which can be viewed online. Work to re-evaluate and revise the Guidance and statutory Supplementary Guidance will form an integral element of the work being undertaken prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan (LDP2) for consultation at the turn of the year.



Consultation StoryMap

## Elected Member Engagement

Active early engagement was undertaken with Elected Members in preparing the Main Issues Report with regular briefings and the establishment of a cross party Local Development Plan Board. Whilst the Board does not meet on a regular basis - rather only when officers wish to discuss specific topics or provide updates - it has proved to be a useful vehicle for engaging with Councillors who participate in the formulation of LDP2.

Councillors also demonstrated their engagement in the Main Issues Report process with wide scale attendance at public consultation sessions, which was well received by the public and Officers who welcomed this political support.

This engagement has formed the foundations of a strong relationship between officers and Elected Members which will continue to build as LDP 2 progresses during 2018/19 and will be reported in subsequent PPF's. Indeed, the Depute Council Leader and Chair of the LDP Board is so invested in the Plan process, he has scheduled fortnightly progress meetings with relevant planning officers.





### Effective land supply and Delivery of Outputs

Within South Ayrshire, land is available for 8084 housing units (the Established Land Supply), and there is a projected effective 5-year housing land supply of 2476 units, this falls short of the Local Development Plan land target of 2545 by 69 units. Consents were issued for 177 housing units in the last year.

As in previous years there were no significant additions to the employment land supply and take up of land remains low.

The employment land supply was not updated within the last year, so no information on employment land take-up can be provided. However no significant business-related development on new sites was undertaken in the previous year.

## Development Management

South Ayrshire determined 962 applications in 2017/18. This can be broken down as 743 planning applications and 219 other consents (e.g. listed building, advertisements and others). This is an increase of 12.4% in the number of planning applications/consents from 2016/17 in which period 856 applications were decided. Contrastingly, there was a 3.74% drop in the number of planning applications decided nationally over the same period. South Ayrshire however remains one of the busier planning authorities of its type in Scotland in terms of the volume of planning applications/consents. The slight reduction in decision timescales is reflective of the significant increase in casework over the period.

There was an increase in the number of 'major' planning applications decided; from 3 in 2016/17 to 12 in 2017/18. 10 'major' planning applications decided in the period 2017/18 were subject to processing agreements and all were determined within the agreed timescales of the agreements.

The number of 'local' developments increased from 640 in 2016/17 to 731 in 2017/18; an increase of 14.2%. The overall average time taken to determine 'local' applications in 2017/18 was 7.4 weeks; a figure significantly below the national average of 9.0 weeks. 85.5% of 'local' planning applications in 2017/18 were determined within 2 months; which again is significantly above the national average of 74.1%. The time taken to determine

'local' applications (non-householder) has increased from 7.1 weeks to 7.7 weeks; but is still significantly below the national average of 10.7 weeks, and in terms of householder applications this has marginally increased from 6.6 weeks to 6.7 weeks. This is not considered to represent a significant increase and remains below the national average of 7.3 weeks.

The approval rate of applications fell from 92.5% in 2016/17 to 90.7% in 2016/17.



## Major developments and energy consents

During 2017/18, 23 applications were reported to Regulatory Panel including two reports on S36 consents for large windfarms. The schemes being considered cover a wide range of development types including large scale residential on allocated sites, a large residential conversion of a listed building with enabling development, a new secondary school, residential and commercial development at Ayr Racecourse, a large scale assisted living complex, retail development and three major windfarm developments.

All of these developments with the exception of two of the windfarm applications were recommended for approval. Many major developments require Section 75 legal agreements or similar and consequently the number of major decisions issued is less than the 23 reported to Regulatory Panel. In the Reporting year, 12 decisions for major applications, not including two approvals of matters specified in conditions, were issued (10 of which were approved). All but two of these applications were project managed through the use of processing agreements. The two that were not subject to a processing agreement were issued within the 4 month statutory time period. The total fee income for major developments issued in this reporting year (including the two matters specified in conditions approvals) was £121,146.

Early engagement is actively encouraged through the Council's pre-application process.

In the reporting year 15 detailed pre-application responses were issued for a wide range of major and energy related development proposals including; large residential, non-policy compliant urban expansion, residential conversion with enabling development, care accommodation, landfill, waste to energy, CHP, anaerobic digestion, biomass, office and leisure facilities. The depth and quality of this advice has largely been welcomed by those in receipt who have commended the Planning Service for its positive and constructive approach. The Council charges a fee for formal pre-application advice and the amount charged for advice provided on major developments and energy consents in the reporting year was £11,300. Ten proposals were the subject of Proposals of application Notice in the Reporting Year.



## Processing Agreements

Processing agreements were used for all, but 2, major and energy consent applications. This is a proportionate and measured approach. The 'Governance' case study in this PPF provides an example of the positive use of processing agreements by South Ayrshire Council.

## Legacy Cases

The definition of 'legacy' cases has recently been amended to cover cases more than one-year-old. South Ayrshire Council has a relatively large number of major developments which will typically require environmental impact assessment, often with the submission of addendums, during processing and legal agreements to be concluded after the decision has been taken. Timescales associated with such matters will quickly move an application into the new 'legacy' definition. However, the Council is not complacent regarding this and actively seeks to project manage application processing timescales and to draw matters to a conclusion quickly.

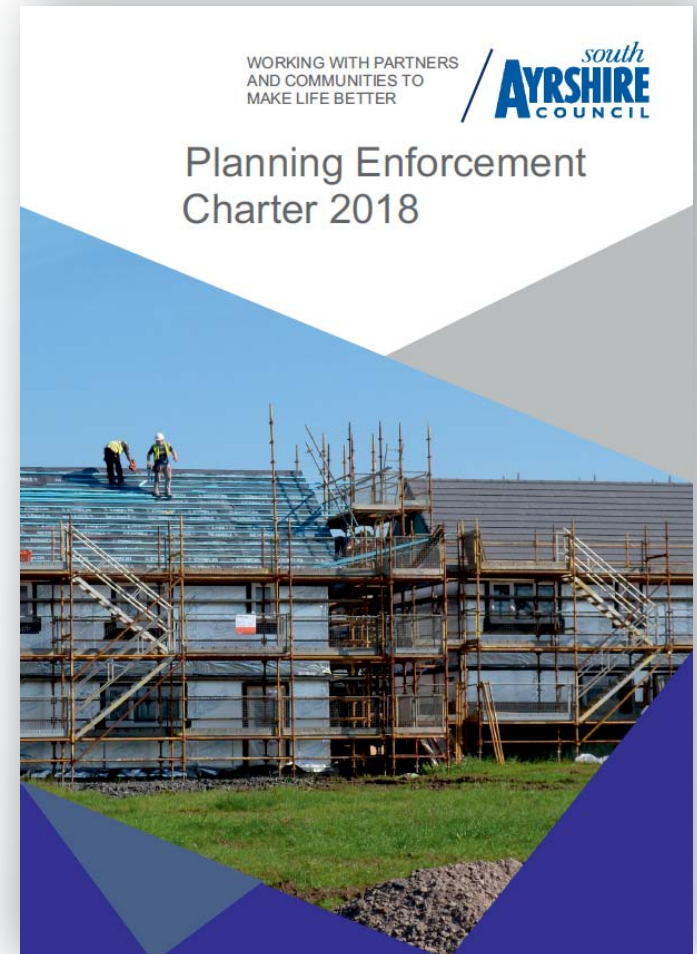
## Enforcement

The number of cases being taken up by the enforcement team has increased from 207 in 2016/17 to 252 with 179 of these being resolved. The number of Enforcement Notices served was 16 (one of which was subsequently withdrawn) and this is at a similar level to last year, although double that of 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The reason for this higher number of Enforcement Notices being served is through the continued increased use of S33A Notices (i.e. a notice seeking submission of a retrospective application) and a pro-active approach to unauthorised signage in Ayr town centre which involved the service of Enforcement Notices for unauthorised adverts.

The Council's Enforcement Charter was successfully reviewed and updated in March 2018 and this continues to be a particularly useful document for the Enforcement Team and for members of the public alike, as it sets out for South Ayrshire how the enforcement process works, how complaints are investigated and the appeal process.

The Charter also outlines how the Council will carry out pro-active enforcement, as opposed to simply being reactive. An improvement action from the 2016/17 PPF was to formally undertake spot check review of Notifications of Initiation of Development and Certificates of Completion of Development to help record and demonstrate this 'pro-active' component of the Enforcement Service. This exercise has been undertaken successfully and has now been adopted as an ongoing part of the Team's work.

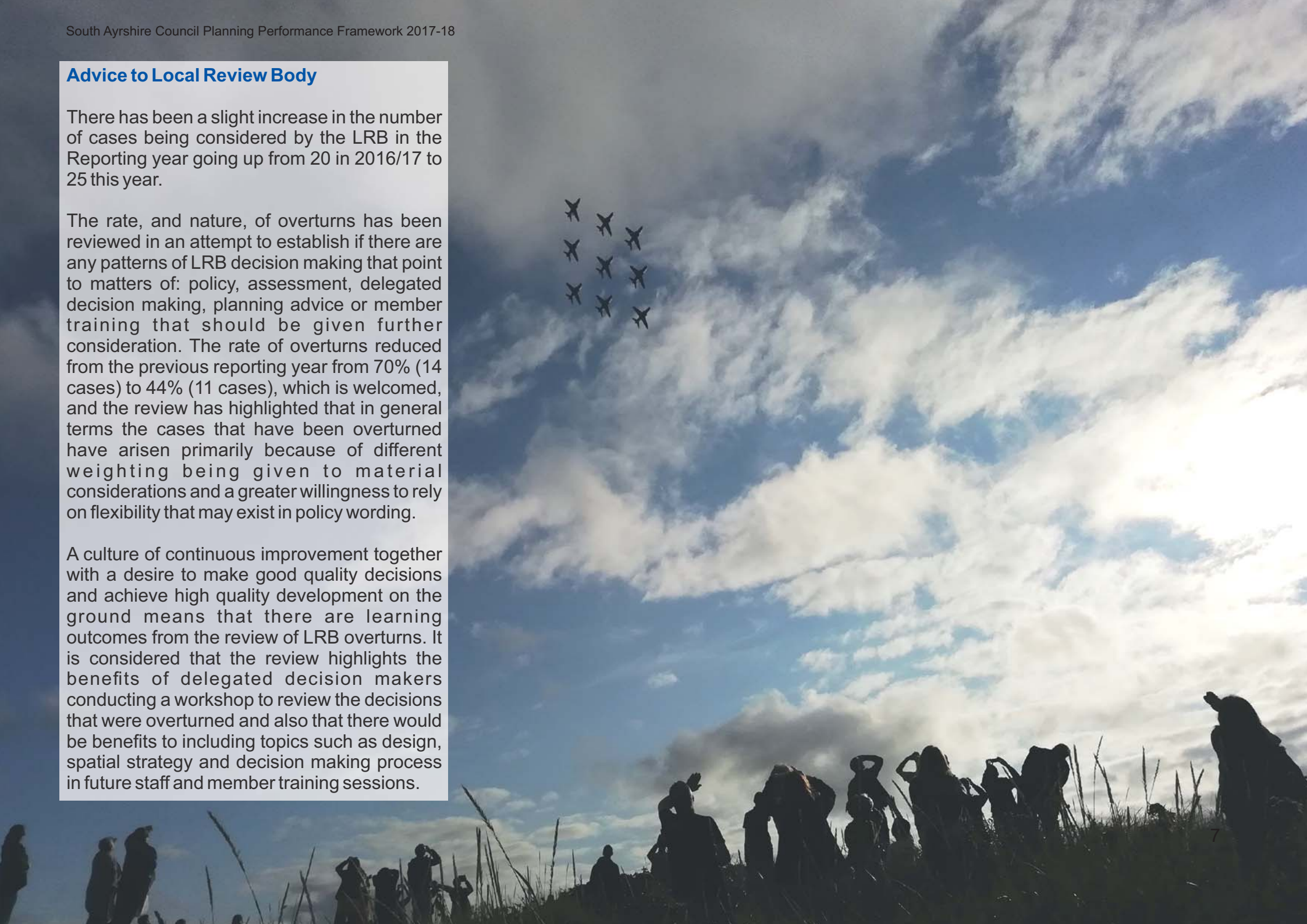


## Advice to Local Review Body

There has been a slight increase in the number of cases being considered by the LRB in the Reporting year going up from 20 in 2016/17 to 25 this year.

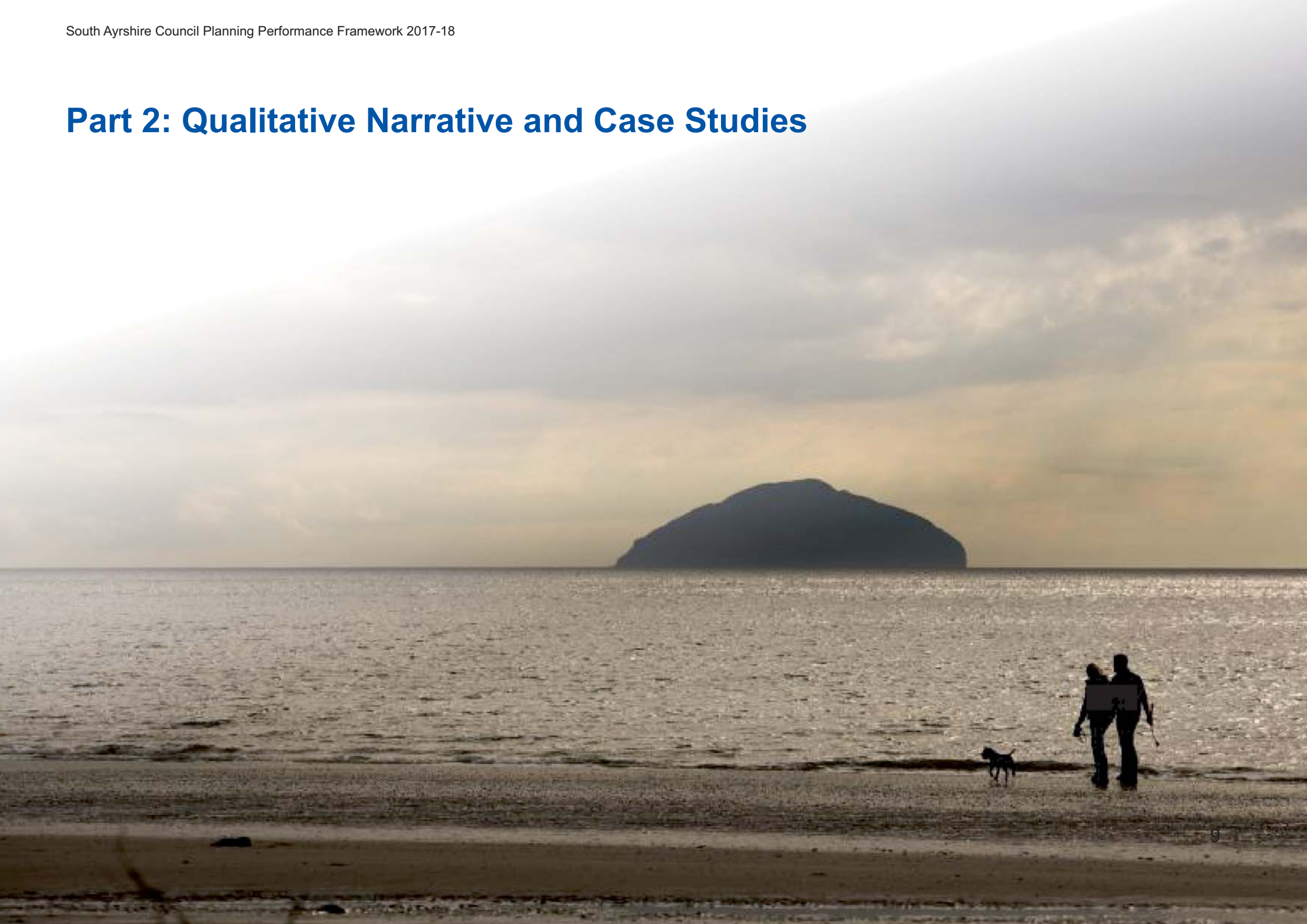
The rate, and nature, of overturns has been reviewed in an attempt to establish if there are any patterns of LRB decision making that point to matters of: policy, assessment, delegated decision making, planning advice or member training that should be given further consideration. The rate of overturns reduced from the previous reporting year from 70% (14 cases) to 44% (11 cases), which is welcomed, and the review has highlighted that in general terms the cases that have been overturned have arisen primarily because of different weighting being given to material considerations and a greater willingness to rely on flexibility that may exist in policy wording.

A culture of continuous improvement together with a desire to make good quality decisions and achieve high quality development on the ground means that there are learning outcomes from the review of LRB overturns. It is considered that the review highlights the benefits of delegated decision makers conducting a workshop to review the decisions that were overturned and also that there would be benefits to including topics such as design, spatial strategy and decision making process in future staff and member training sessions.





## Part 2: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

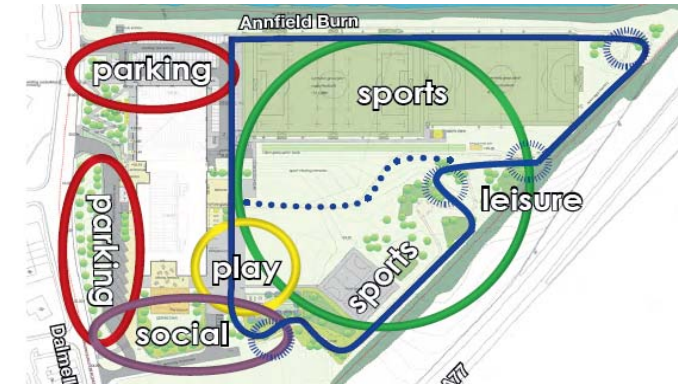






**Qualitative Narrative Table**

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7
Design	✓	Interdisciplinary Working	✓
Conservation	✓	Collaborative Working	✓
Regeneration	✓	Community Engagement	✓
Environment	✓	Placemaking	✓
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning	✓	Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	✓	Process Improvement	
Housing Supply	✓	Project Management	✓
Affordable Housing	✓	Skills Sharing	✓
Economic Development	✓	Staff Training	✓
Enforcement		Online Systems	✓
Development Management Processes	✓	Transport	
Planning Applications	✓	Active Travel	
Other: Councillor Training			✓



## Case Study: Improving pre-application engagement and enhancing economic opportunity



This case study looks at how South Ayrshire has and continues to improve upon its pre-application service; both in terms of ensuring that the introduction of a paid service does not discourage early engagement and how the Council works proactively with significant commercial interests that are important to the South Ayrshire economy.

The Council formalised its [pre-application service](#) in April 2016, when charges were first introduced. So as to retain an 'open door' approach, a chargeable service ran alongside a free pre-application service. The chargeable service was provided initially over the period 2016-2017, so that the Council could better understand how a chargeable service would be received and that opportunities to 'add value' to development would not be lost.

The uptake of the paid pre-application service proved popular and achieved its target within the first year. The experience, provided the confidence that a chargeable pre-application service would not deter the submission of pre-application enquiries and in doing so, we could resource a more meaningful and productive dialogue with prospective applicants.

The Council moved to a fully chargeable pre-application service in December 2017.

### Goals

Whilst adopting this service, it was nonetheless evident that the pre-application service was still limited in so far as it was 'reactive' to those wishing to engage with the Planning service. It did not seek proactive engagement; (particularly with major employers). The importance of such interests to the local economy is formally recognised, both within the corporate Council Plan and the Local Development Plan. Seeking opportunities to exploit this opportunity, the Planning Service considered how it could have better synergy in its collaboration with the Council's Economic Development Service. The Economic Development Service has closer contact with local industry and this provided a conduit to proactively engage with significant employers within South Ayrshire. There was mutual recognition to both services of the benefits to working collaboratively with local employers.

### Lead Officer: J. Esslemont/M. McClelland

*“South Ayrshire Council's Planning Department was very supportive both during the pre-submission and application consideration stages, with approval of the application being in line with the project delivery schedule”*

*Spirit Aerosystems, Prestwick*

## Outcomes

The Planning service assigned a senior member of staff to work as a liaison with the Enterprise Service, so as to enhance the overall engagement of the Council with significant employers within South Ayrshire. The staff member attends monthly scheduled meetings with the Council's Enterprise service, where potential development aspirations of large scale economic interests within South Ayrshire are identified and explored. When appropriate the Planning representative will attend meetings with the commercial concern, to understand and advise on their options to develop and grow business. In the past year the Planning service has worked with two significant employers, one who want to develop a Research and Development facility within the Aerospace sector and another who seeks expansion and a visitor centre for their high end fashion products.



This approach puts into practice national planning policy (SPP paras 92, 93 & 106).

This Case Study contributes towards the Quality of Outcomes and Quality of Service and Engagement

Key Markers:

- 3 Early Collaboration
- 10 Cross-sector stakeholders
- 12 Corporate working

Key Areas:

Stakeholders

## Case Study: StoryMapping Development

In November 2016, South Ayrshire Council won the overall Scottish Award for Quality in Planning for the StoryMap version of its first Local Development Plan (LDP1). The StoryMap product, developed by ESRI (a company specialising in geographic information systems software), combined text, pictures, interactive mapping and video to produce a “3-dimensional” document, with hyperlinks to associated documents, such as Supplementary Guidance and strategy mapping, which has attracted greater public interest and engagement in planning, in South Ayrshire, beyond the usual development industry professionals and community activists. The document also serves as a tool to market and promote South Ayrshire.

Recognising the potential of StoryMapping to enhance public interest in planning in South Ayrshire, in 2017/18, the Planning Service built on this award-winning foundation, by developing and extending the format for use in consultation on the Main Issues Report (MIR) of its replacement Local Development Plan (LDP2), and in enlivening the Maybole Conservation Area Appraisal and the South Ayrshire Core Paths Plan.

### Goals

The principle aim in developing an enhanced StoryMap document format was to increase community engagement in the development plan and related processes. Subsidiary aims were to improve efficiency in collecting and collating public comments and in the deployment of staff and financial resources.

### LDP2 – MIR StoryMap and QuestionWhere Consultation

South Ayrshire Council developed the StoryMap concept further by combining it with another ESRI product, QuestionWhere, and its own Environment and Conservation web mapping, to produce an innovative and powerful interactive, consultation tool, with a strong spatial element. The tool was used to undertake public engagement on the MIR of LDP2, between November 2017 and January 2018.

From a portal on the Planning home page of the Council's web site, the public was able to access a table of contents, which corresponded with the relevant sections of the MIR. The table contained hyperlinks to each main issue ([here](#)), enabling the public to comment on those issues in which it was particularly interested, without having to read through, or comment on, the entire document.

Each hyperlink took members of the public to the relevant section of the MIR document, at the end of which they could leave comments on each identified option, in a form that appeared in an adjacent window, on the click of a button. In the Housing section, a zoomable plan of each site advanced for consideration in the MIR could be viewed via a hyperlink. In addition to commenting on the various candidate sites, the public could suggest alternative sites, by outlining them on a zoomable, interactive map.



### Main Issues Report

Please comment on the following issues



## Outcome

The combined StoryMap/QuestionWhere format proved to be a more attractive and effective method of engaging communities in the MIR process. Of the 799 total comments received on the MIR, 394 were submitted via the StoryMap, with 113 individuals/organisations commenting on-line, compared with 73 total comments received to the MIR of LDP1, of which only 11 were submitted on-line.

In addition to increasing public engagement in the MIR process, the combined StoryMap/QuestionWhere document format enabled the the Planning Service to collate in one place the textual and spatial information gathered, which will inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan, thereby facilitating easier information management and analysis and the future submission of Schedule 4s. Employing this document format for community engagement on the MIR made the process easier to manage, cheaper, less resource intensive and less time-consuming compared with the previous, mixed electronic and paper-based formats. It also allowed the Planning Service to dispense with a bespoke consultation web portal, thereby saving over £8k per year.

*“In 2012/2013, I found LDP1 to be a lengthy document...hard to read and submitting comments to be a complicated, tricky process. In 2017, when the MIR was released for public consultation, I was pleasantly surprised when SAC Planning introduced their new tool as an Interactive Story Map. I found the story map to be an excellent and effective tool to use: it demonstrates local issues... throughout South Ayrshire in a really clear way. I cannot compliment the format of the document enough – it is now so easy to navigate, follow and understand the 'main issues' in our area: the presentation in the story map, in my experience, has improved the whole process of engagement making the dialogue much more effective. The SAC story map brought the main issues to life and put a meaning to the areas that could/would be impacted. I consider the new layout for the LDP to be a forward thinking effective tool that enhances community understanding and engagement.”*

Prestwick South Community Council



## Maybole Conservation Area Character Appraisal 'Cascading' Story Map

As an integral part of a Stage 1 Heritage Lottery Fund bid for a community-led regeneration project in the historic market town of Maybole, the Planning Service prepared a Character Appraisal for the town's outstanding conservation area, in a 'cascading' StoryMap format. Character appraisals for other conservation areas are published on the Historic Environment web page in 2-dimensional .pdf format.

In an effort to attract greater public interest in the history and character of Maybole, it was decided to publish the Character Appraisal as a 'cascading' StoryMap, combining text, interactive, 'zoomable' mapping and historical and current photos. As you scroll through the StoryMap ([here](#)), text boxes appear on top of photos or mapping, containing information relating to the photos or maps.

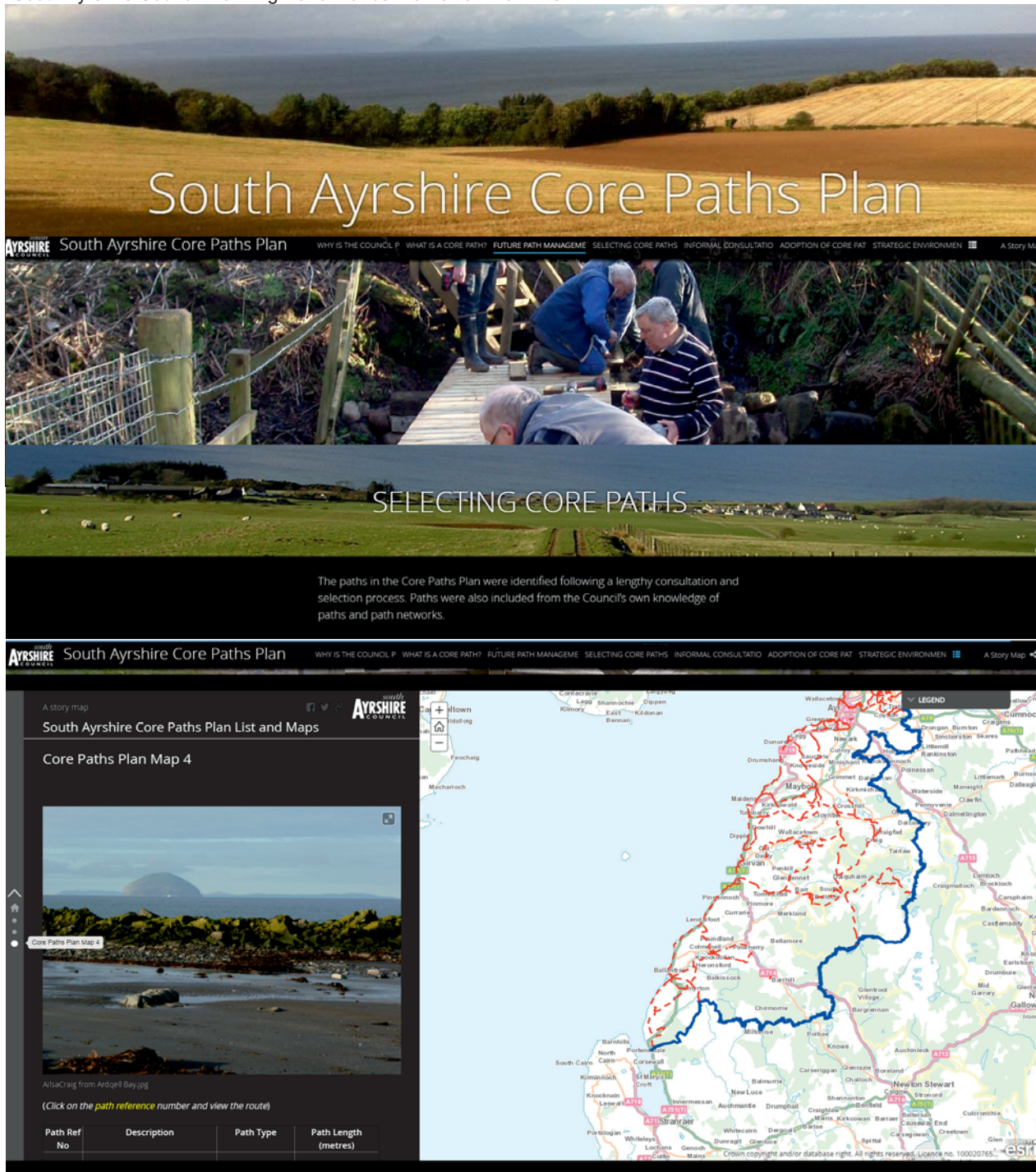
### Outcome

The StoryMap format brings life to the Appraisal and the history of Maybole, as evidenced by the fact it has had 132 views since its publication on the Historic Environment web page, compared with 57 for Troon Conservation Area, 54 for Ayr Central and Ayr 2, 20 for Dundonald and 4 for Klrkoswald during the same period.



*"The story map version of the Conservation Area Appraisal was a useful tool in understanding the Conservation Area in Maybole. It presents a large amount of information in a very interactive and easily digestible way. It also made searching for information on the Conservation Area much more accessible than a .pdf or paper copy."*

Lynne Yuille,  
Maybole Regeneration Project Officer



## Core Paths Plan (Cascading Story Map)

For similar reasons of maximising public accessibility and interest, the Planning Service decided to employ the 'cascading' StoryMap format to publish its adopted Core Paths Plan ([here](#)). Like Maybole CACA, it combines text, photos and interactive mapping, with text boxes containing relevant information appearing on top of photos or maps, as you scroll through the document. Also, by clicking on a specific core path on the Core Paths List, a larger scale map of the path appears to the right of the List. Similarly, by clicking on a core path on the map, a dialogue box appears with information on the Path.

## Outcome

The Story Map has received 360 views since it was published on the Council's web pages, compared to 46 views of the .pdf copy of the CPP within the same period.

Lead Officer: N. Feggans

### Key Performance Markers:



- 6 Continuous improvements
- 7 LDP less than 5 years since adoption
- 10 Cross-sector stakeholders
- 11 Regular and proportionate policy advice
- 12 Corporate working across services for customer benefit
- 13 Sharing good practice

## Case Study: Processing Agreements for Major Development



South Ayrshire Council is committed to offering an effective Planning Service that supports sustainable economic growth and promotes high quality development. Effective governance is crucial in seeking to achieve these outcomes. Following the review of the Planning System in 2009, South Ayrshire Council restructured the Planning Service to

more closely reflect the priority to be afforded to major development. As part of this restructuring, the Priority Projects Team was created to deal exclusively with major developments and energy consent applications. This structure aligns staff resource and working practices (i.e. Processing Agreements and collaborative working) to address priorities and to ensure that major developments and energy consents are effectively project managed. The Priority Projects Team comprises of a Planning Co-ordinator and two Supervisory Planners (with wide ranging experience in Development Management) who focus on major developments. The Team also undertakes the planning enforcement role of the Council through a Compliance Supervisor and an Enforcement Officer. A Planner / Planning assistant post remains vacant. The Team also provides planning advice to the Local Review Body.

In 2017/18, 23 applications were reported to Regulatory Panel including two reports on S36 consents for large windfarms. The schemes being considered cover a wide range of development types including; large scale residential on allocated sites, a large residential conversion of a listed building with enabling development, a new secondary school, residential and commercial development at Ayr Racecourse, a large scale

residential conversion of a listed building with enabling development, a new secondary school, residential and commercial development at Ayr Racecourse, a large scale assisted living complex, retail development and three windfarm developments. All of these developments with the exception of two of the windfarm applications were recommended for approval. Many major developments require Section 75 legal agreements or similar and consequently the number of major decisions issued is less than the 23 reported to Regulatory Panel. In the Reporting year, 12 decisions for major applications, not including two approvals of matters specified in conditions, were issued. All but two of these applications were project managed through the use of processing agreements. The two that were not subject to a processing agreement were issued within the 4 month statutory time period.

### Goal

The goal of the Priority Projects team is to provide a high quality, straightforward, proportionate and transparent service which is focussed on delivering high quality development. We seek to do this by; being positive, constructive and realistic, actively encouraging early and ongoing pre-application engagement, working collaboratively with prospective developers



and key stakeholders, ensuring Processing Agreements are promoted from the start of the process, using our major development tracker to monitor progress of all major and energy consents at pre-application, application and post-determination stages, regularly monitoring and reviewing all processing agreements to keep applications moving, ensuring that deadlines are met or where necessary further time extensions are secured and ensuring that Processing Agreements are published online ([here](#)).

### Holmston House

This is a major development proposal for residential conversion of a listed building in Ayr together with the erection of a care home in the grounds acting as 'enabling' development. The process involved formal pre-application engagement in 2016 with the applicant and internal / external stakeholders and then active project management of the applications for planning permission and listed building consent through the use of processing agreements which were regularly reviewed.

The planning application was received early in 2017 and the decision issued in March 2018 after 3 referrals to Regulatory Panel, on each occasion following pro-active engagement with the applicant, in order to find a way through to a positive outcome. Ultimately the decision was issued with the inclusion of pre-commencement conditions (as opposed to a S75) to capture affordable housing, education and enabling aspects of the development. This crucially means that a positive planning outcome was delivered with the benefit of avoiding stalling the process or creating a legacy case.



## Outcome

The planning and listed building consent applications were both approved and issued within agreed timeframes. The approved scheme manages to balance the requirements for enabling development alongside the sensitive restoration and re-use of an iconic landmark building in Ayr.

**Lead Officer: A. Cooke**

*“Processing Agreements are very useful tool for both sides involved. The Agreement provides a clear overview of requirements and timescales for applicants when applying for planning permission.”*

*South Ayrshire Landscape Officer*

## Elements of a high quality Planning Service: Governance and Quality of Service and Engagement



Key markers:

2. Project Management,
3. Early collaboration,
4. Legal agreements,
12. Corporate working across services for customer benefit
14. Stalled sites / legacy cases (conclusion / withdrawal)

Stakeholders

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Key areas:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Project Management

*“We first submitted a Pre-Application in April 2016 and found the engagement of the Planning Team extremely helpful and supportive from an early stage. The Team was happy to assist and engage in discussions about the Clients proposals and aspirations for such a prestigious Site and this allowed for a positive response in which we then submitted a PAN Application in October 2016. Again in Meetings and Discussions we found the Planning Team easy to approach and work with and through to submitting the Full Planning Application we found the Processing Agreement as something that was very useful in terms of Target Dates, Consultee Contacts and Information Requirements particularly. All of which we felt help build towards a smoother and positive Application process. The Processing Agreement is not something that most Local Planning Authorities use but it is something that we did find useful and would be hopeful for more Authorities to take on board to aide with Applications. In working alongside South Ayrshire Priority Projects Team there are very few if any negatives we could highlight about the process and we would in fact note that South Ayrshire Council have been one of the most proactive Local Planning Authorities we have dealt with throughout the UK. We also felt that the time aspect and quick response of the Priority Projects Team was very positive and this inevitably avoided any unnecessary delays.”*

*KDP Chartered Architects*

## Case Study: Culture of Continuous Improvement - Training Initiatives

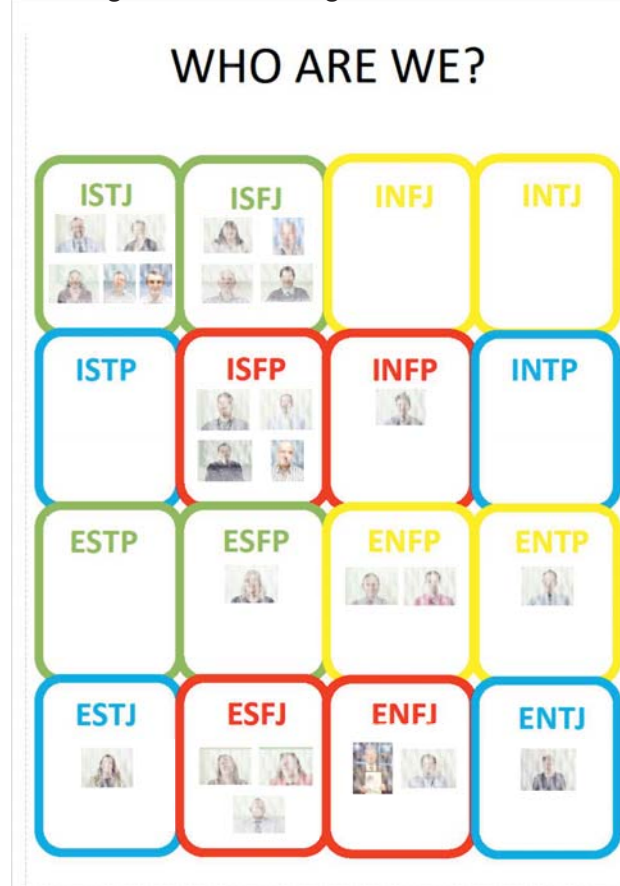
In previous years, we have highlighted the Planning Service involvement in the Council's 'How Good Is Our Council' framework and the Planning Services' monthly 'HGIOC' seminars which have continued during 2017-18, however to supplement and support officers professional development, the focus has moved to personal development and gaining of an understanding how we interact with others.

In addition, a need was identified to support newly Elected Members, and those existing Councillors who were new to planning, with training to fully undertake their roles as members of both the Regulatory Panel and Local Review Board.

### Goals

The service utilised the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) to better understand our strengths and lesser strengths and the way that we perceive and process information. The aim of using the MBTI® was to enhance communication, both within the planning service and outwith with other services and external stakeholders, provide the team with a better understanding of how they deal with conflict and also how we make decisions and engage in work as a team. The focus was also to build a strong team, as we faced an internal management review and restructure (which delayed the service review identified in PPF6).

The provision of training for Councillors was primarily aimed at providing a grounding and understanding of decision making within the statutory framework and to establish a cohesive Planning Authority that breaks down a viewpoint of polarised positions, with an understanding that both officers and Councillors form the Planning Authority and work together to make 'good' decisions.



### Outcomes

The MBTI® team sessions were undertaken by in-house certified trainers, and were preceded by the Planning Service management team undertaking 'one-to-one' feedback sessions and a smaller group session to gain an understanding of how their personality types impact on how they interact with each other and manage the planning service.

Through the two half day team sessions, which involved exercises and activities (including playing with Lego!), members of the planning service gained an understanding of how diversity in the team can be both a strength and a weakness but a greater level of understanding of this diversity can lead to increased communication and more effective teams and ultimately more satisfied customers as a team works to its strengths.



Elected Member training initially took the form of two formal sessions provided by external trainers, which the first session focused on 'What does a good planning decision look like in South Ayrshire' and covered topics such as relationship building between Councillors and officers, the differentiation between Councillors roles on the Regulatory Panel and Local Review Board (LRB), the 'quasi-judicial role' in planning and case studies which led to a mock 'hearing'.

The second session focused on 'Getting to a good planning decision in South Ayrshire – the nuts and bolts', with officers explaining how they assessed an application and reached a recommendation and a discussion regarding the LDP.

The opportunity for officers and Members to meet in an informal setting allowed for open discussion and questions and led to a revision in the way that reports of handling are presented to the Regulatory Panel. In addition an agreement that quarterly update meetings would be held with officers to review decisions and update Members on any changes to policy at a national level, recent appeal decision and case law and provide an opportunity for a refresh on various aspects of decision making, such as the use of planning conditions.

**Lead Officer: F. Mullen**

*“As a highly regulated area, I believe that on-going training for Members is essential. During the training, it was useful for Members to hear the thought process from the Planning Officer, but conversely, to allow the Members to discuss their thought process and emphasise that we are a team”*

*Chair of Regulator Panel, Councillor Connolly*

*“I have no hesitation in recommending the procedures used by Planning in South Ayrshire Council. As I'm sure you will appreciate after the Election last May we had new Members who joined the Planning Committee. 2 days of intensive training was excellent, not only for the new Members but for longer serving Members like myself on the Planning Committee...As I have said before excellent training.”*

*Councillor Cavana*



**These Case Studies contribute towards the Culture of Continuous Improvement**

**Key Markers  
6 Continuous Improvement**

# Part 3: Service Improvements





## Committed improvements and actions 2017-2018

1	Respond to the outcome of the review of the Scottish Planning System	Yes - SAC provided a response in relation to the review of the Scottish Planning system, endorsed by the Portfolio Holder and evidenced in the Stage 1 Report of the Planning (Scotland) Bill, May 2018
2	Review the Planning Development function and associated functions	No – Service Review not undertaken due corporate restructure of senior management within the Council. To be completed 2018/19
3	Review new two tiered pre-application service	Yes – Reviewed and revised and evidenced within the case study.
4	Confirm test and review revised practice to enable conditions monitoring software to assist with systematic monitoring of development with environmentally high risks and record and monitor planning obligations	No – Not completed due to staff vacancies. Officers however continue to pro-actively monitor development
5	Work to inform next enforcement charter due in January 2018: Spot check review of NID's and certificates of completion Proactive spot check monitoring of completion certificates and review against approved planning permission	Yes – completed and evidenced within PPF 7.
6	Develop and complete Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education	Yes – completed and progressing toward adoption
7	Introduce Access Charter and publish outdoor access enquiries standard	No - not completed due to resource issues, however on track for completion 2018/19
8	Refresh Planning Architects Forums	Ran as part of the MIR consultation, public engagement exercise, utilising both Question Where? and StoryMap online programmes.
9	Review and scope improvements to processes for the consideration of applications by members at Regulatory Panel meetings	Yes- completed and progressing toward adoption of revised Procedures for the Handling of Planning Applications
10	Monitor delegated decisions overturned by the Local Review Body.	Yes – completed and evidenced within PPF 7.

## Committed improvements and actions 2018-2019

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2018-2019	
1	Progress with IDOX migration
2	Progress adoption of Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education
3	Commence use of Tree Works module in IDOX, and undertake proactive monitoring of approvals
4	Undertake review of Planning Service
5	Undertake review of LRB procedures to identify improvements and efficiencies and monitor decisions to assess implications for policy and guidance.
6	Using the existing Housing Protocol as a template (introduced in PPF6) , introduce protocols to achieve improvements in internal projects with other sections of Council
7	Review EIA templates to achieve statutory compliance
8	Review pre-application service and guidance to provide clarity in pre-application process and efficiencies in the service
9	Commence use of developer contributions module in IDOX to meet audit and governance contributions



# Part 4: National Headline Indicators





## A: NHI Key outcomes- Development Planning:

Local and Strategic Development Planning:	2017-18	2016-17
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period  <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	LDP1 -3 years and 6 months Town Centre & Retail LDP (TCRLDP) – 11 months	LDP1 - 2 years and 6 months TCRLDP – not adopted
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes-later	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes - Timing of the events was later than anticipated, but still within the year. Consultation timescale was extended to account for Christmas break. Development Plan Scheme has been amended to reflect changes to subsequent timescales.	Yes

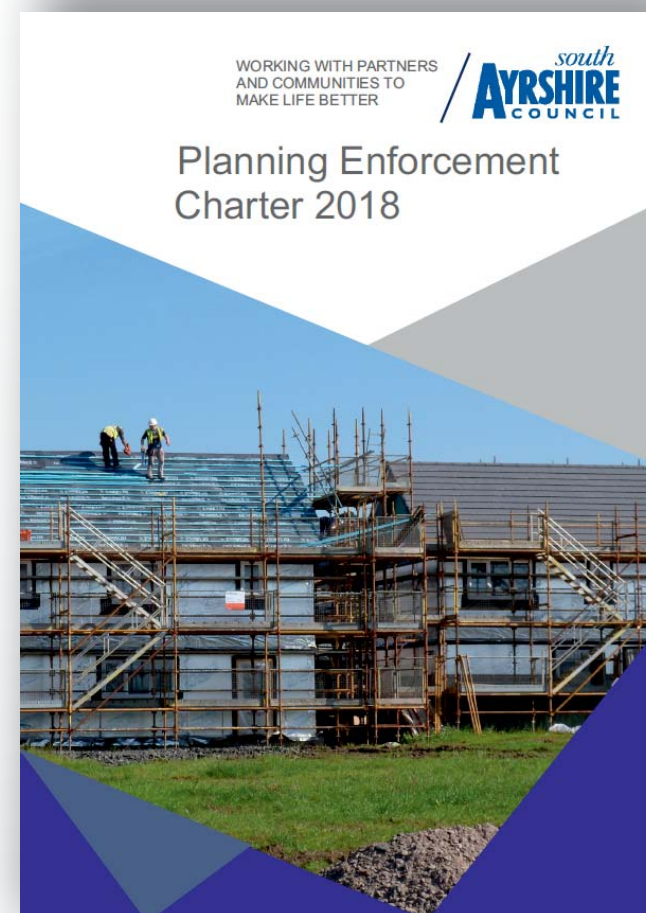
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
Established housing land supply	8084 units <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	8667 units <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
5-year effective housing land supply programming	2476 units <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	2719 units <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
5-year effective land supply total capacity	7269 units <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	7724 units <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
5-year housing supply target	2545 units <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	2545 units <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)	4.9 years <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	5.3 years <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
Housing approvals	174 units	75 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	1045 units <i>HLA Year: 2017 Final</i>	1002 units <i>HLA Year: 2016 Final</i>
Marketable employment land supply	Not surveyed As in previous years there were no significant additions to the employment land supply and take up of land remains low. The land supply was not updated within the last year, so no information on employment land take-up can be provided. However no significant business related development on new sites was undertaken in the previous year.	Not surveyed
Employment land take-up during reporting year	Not surveyed	Not surveyed

## B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management

Project Planning	2017-18	2016-17
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	8.27% (59)	9.82% (62)
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	80% (8)	100% (10)
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	90.6%	92.5%
Delegation rate	96.1%	96.1%
Validation	62.6%	55%
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	13.9 weeks	N/A weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	7.7 weeks	7.1 weeks
Householder developments	7.1 weeks	6.6 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	4	0
Number remaining	5	6

## C: Enforcement activity

	2017-18	2016-17
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed	1 month	14 months
Requirement: review every 2 years	Feb 2018	Jan 2016
Complaints lodged and investigated	348	317
Breaches identified – no further action taken	252	207
Cases closed	179	154
Notices served	16	14
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

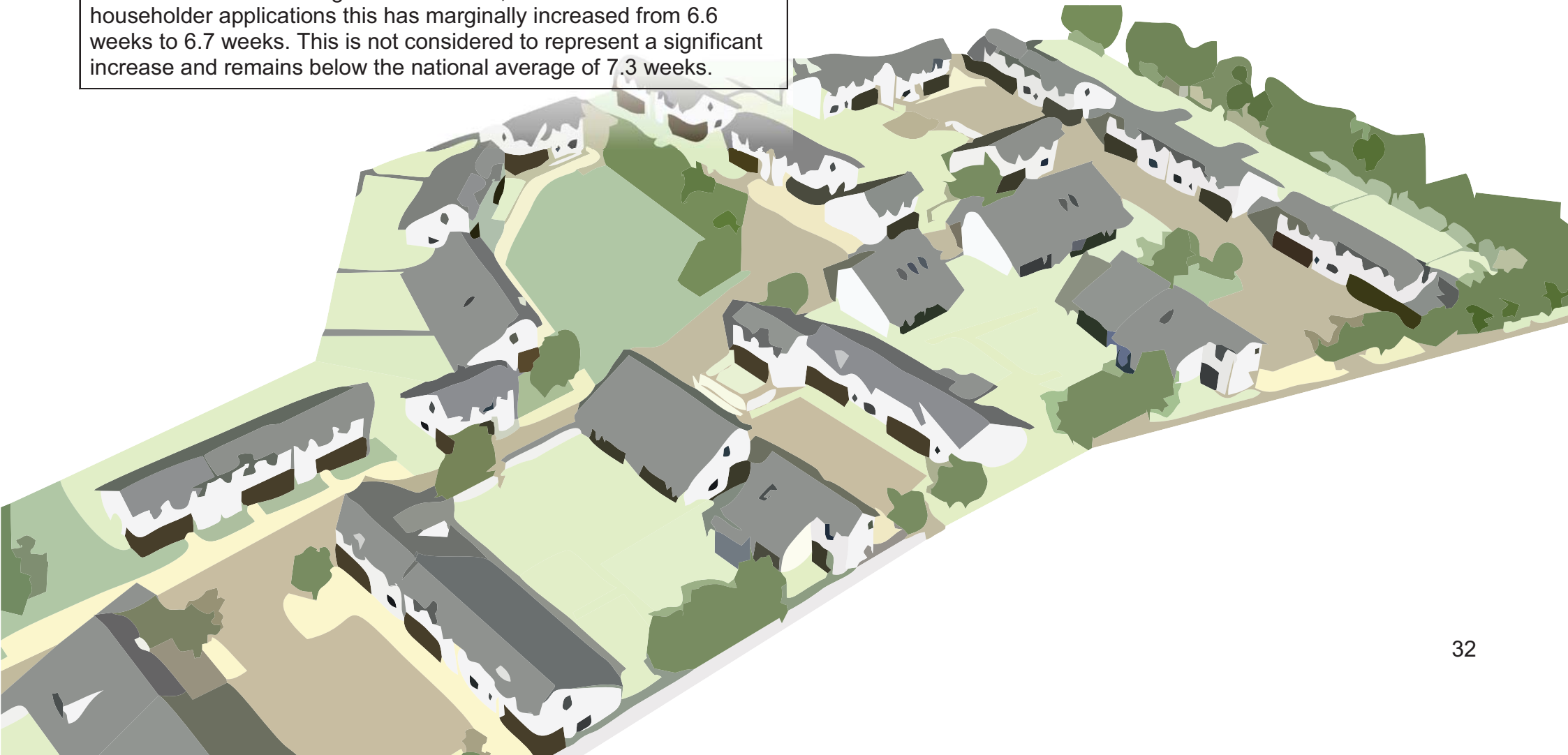


## D: NHI Key outcomes

### Commentary

#### Short contextual statement

The time taken to determine 'local' applications (non-householder) has increased from 7.1 weeks to 7.7 weeks; but is still significantly below the national average of 10.7 weeks, and in terms of householder applications this has marginally increased from 6.6 weeks to 6.7 weeks. This is not considered to represent a significant increase and remains below the national average of 7.3 weeks.



# Part 5: Official Statistics

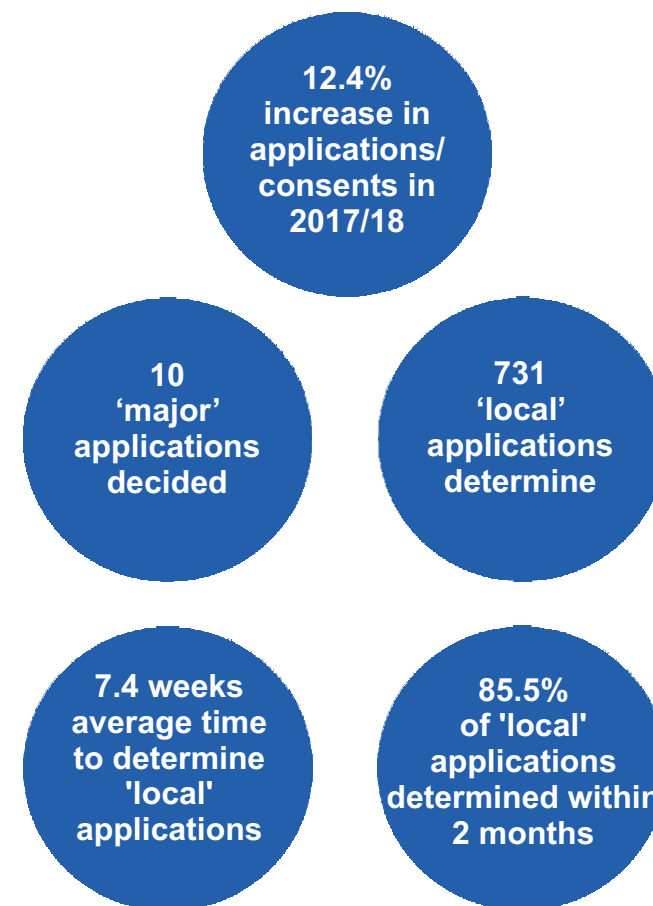






## A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Overall	2017-18	2017-18	2016-17
Major developments	2	13.9weeks	N/A
Local developments (non-householder)	363	7.7 weeks	7.1 weeks
Local: less than 2 months	(79.6%)		
Local: more than 2 months	(20.4%)		
Householder developments	368	7.1 weeks	6.6 weeks
Local: less than 2 months	(91.3%)		
Local: more than 2 months	(8.7%)		
<b>Local housing developments</b>			
Major	N/A	N/A weeks	N/A weeks
Local housing developments	74	8.7 weeks	8.2 weeks
Local: less than 2 months	(70.3%)		
Local: more than 2 months	(29.7%)		
<b>Business and Industry</b>			
Major	1	15.9 weeks	N/A
Local business and industry developments	17	7.3 weeks	7.2 weeks
Local: less than 2 months	(64.7%)		
Local: more than 2 months	(35.3%)		
<b>EIA Developments</b>			
	#	weeks	weeks
<b>Other Consents</b>			
• As listed in the guidance(right)	#	weeks	weeks
<b>Planning/legal agreements</b>			
• Major: average time	#	weeks	weeks
• Local: average time	#	weeks	weeks



## B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2017-18		2016-2017	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	26	15	57.7%	6	33.3%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	6	3	50%	1	25%

## C: Context

The performance of the Planning Service remains robust and ahead of the Scottish average despite a significant increase in planning application numbers over the period 2017/18. Major applications continue to be project managed successfully by the use of Processing Agreements.



# Part 6: Workforce Information





## South Ayrshire Council Planning Service

	Tier 1 <i>Chief Executive</i>	Tier 2 <i>Director</i>	Tier 3 <i>Head of Service</i>	Tier 4 <i>Manager</i>
<b>Head of Planning Service</b>				1

RTPI Qualified Staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	9	9
Development Planning	8	8
Enforcement	-	-
Specialists		
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	3	3

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	1
30-39	8
40-49	4
50 and over	10





# Part 7: Planning Committee Information







Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	1*
Planning committees	9
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	4
Local Review Body	12
LRB site visits	7

\*To approve publication of Main Issues Report of replacement LDP (LDP2) for public consultation.





# Performance Markers

Our report on meeting 17-18 improvements is set out on page 26. In addition we have reviewed our response to the amber and red from PPF6 a commentary is set out in the following table.





No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	<p><b>Decision-making:</b> continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]</p>	Amber	<p><b>Major Applications</b> Not applicable.</p> <p><b>Local Non-Householder Applications</b> Your timescales of 7.1 weeks are slower than the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 11.1 weeks. <b>RAG = Amber</b></p> <p><b>Householder Applications</b> Your timescales of 6.6 weeks are slower than the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. <b>RAG = Amber</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Amber</b></p>
2	<p><b>Processing agreements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and</li> <li>availability publicised on website</li> </ul>	Green	<p>You encourage all applicants for major developments to enter into processing agreements and this year all major developments were subject to a processing agreement which all met the intended timescales. You also encourage the use of processing agreements for complex or contentious applications. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>Guidance and draft agreement are published on your website. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
3	<p><b>Early collaboration</b> with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and</li> <li>clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</li> </ul>	Green	<p>You have introduced a formal pre-application service which has recently been reviewed with changes identified for the coming year. Moving from a two-tier approach to a single tier. You have provided some good examples of how pre-application discussions have positively influenced developments. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>You now cover legal agreements in pre-application discussions which includes a draft template and definitions to help reduce timescales for sign off further down the line. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall Green = Green</b></p>

Whilst it is acknowledged there was a marginal decrease in performance that effects an amber rating being given, the timescales for 'local' and 'householder' applications remain significantly above the Scottish average. South Ayrshire Planning Service remains one of the better performing authorities in Scotland.

4	<b>Legal agreements:</b> 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	You have dealt with 2 local applications with legal agreements attached and the average timescale is 15.3 weeks which is faster than the Scottish average. You have introduced a standard template and definitions and include in pre-application discussions.
5	<b>Enforcement charter</b> updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was published in January 2016 making it 14 months old at the end of the reporting year.
6	<b>Continuous improvement:</b> progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	Green	Whilst you have had some reductions in decision making performance, you remain above the average. Your LDP is up to date. <b>RAG = Green</b>  You have made progress with some, but not all, of your service improvements and have set out 10 for the coming year. <b>RAG = Green</b>  <b>Overall RAG = Green</b>
7	<b>Local development plan</b> less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your LDP is 2 years and 6 months old at the end of the reporting period. You have recently adopted a Town Centre LDP.
8	<b>Development plan scheme</b> – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and</li> <li>project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</li> </ul>	Green	A review of your LDP is underway and is on course for adoption within the required 5 year timescale. <b>RAG = Green</b>  You have a project plan and project board in place to oversee the replacement LDP and there has been no change to the timescales. <b>RAG = Green</b>  <b>Overall RAG = Green</b>
9	<b>Elected members engaged early</b> (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	Red	It is not clear from your report what engagement you have undertaken with elected members in the preparation of your MIR.

We accept that the commentary on PPF6 did not explicitly detail Elected Member engagement, South Ayrshire Planning Service is satisfied that the fullest of engagement was undertaken and continues with Elected Members.

10	<b>Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early</b> (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	You have held a range of events in conjunction with community planning and justice. New formats for consultation have been trialled and you have utilised the place standard tool as a means of identifying issues. A new approach has been implemented for call for sites and you have also engaged with local school children to seek their views on the area and priorities for change.
11	<b>Regular and proportionate policy advice</b> produced on information required to support applications.	Green	You have a range of supplementary guidance in place and have produced guidance for pre-application discussions and standard templates for legal agreements.
12	<b>Corporate working across services</b> to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	Green	You have worked with other council services to ensure shared objectives are met through the council house building programme. You have also worked in collaboration with community planning and justice on your LDP engagement.
13	<b>Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge</b> between authorities	Green	During the reporting year you have strengthened links with the other Ayrshire authorities as well as Dumfries and Galloway. You have provided examples of projects you have worked on. However you have not demonstrated how you have used this work to learn from other authorities or any improvements you have made and should provide further details in future reports.
14	<b>Stalled sites / legacy cases:</b> conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	You have cleared 6 cases during the reporting year with 4 applications remaining which are being taken forward with processing agreements attached.
15	<b>Developer contributions:</b> clear and proportionate expectations set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and in pre-application discussions	Amber	<p>Last year you included a service improvement commitment to complete supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education. This has not been achieved and is carried forward to the coming year. <b>RAG = Amber</b></p> <p>A new pre-application service was implemented in April 2016. It is not indicated whether developer contributions are routinely discussed at these meetings. <b>RAG = Red</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Amber</b></p>

The issue of supplementary guidance on developer contributions has been addressed through 2017-18. The matter of developer contributions are routinely discussed and embedded in the template from pre-application responses.







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