
South Ayrshire Council Planning Performance Framework

Annual Report

2015-16

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VISION

South Ayrshire Council shares with its community planning partners a vision for the area which seeks:

“To make South Ayrshire the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland”.

To support this aspiration the spatial strategy for the area aims to:

- Support development that encourages sustainable economic growth, improves the quality of the environment and creates sustainable communities;
- Guide development to appropriate places;
- Provide the right conditions to help regenerate South Ayrshire’s town centres and keep them vibrant, while conserving their historic character;
- Encourage renewable- energy developments without damaging the landscape and countryside;
- Promote tourism while protecting the coastline and other assets on which tourism is based; and;
- Help the development of Glasgow Prestwick Airport and the area’s seaports as well as support the principles of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth in the series of Planning Performance Frameworks which have been prepared by the Planning Service of South Ayrshire Council.

Last year the service reported a sustained performance against a number of key indicators and this year's report highlights further improvements, innovation and progress, in decision making and in the advice given to developers. However it was also recognised in the feedback we received there were a number of areas where further improvements could be made. These included improvements in streamlining the assessment of applications, and reducing the timescales for applications with legal agreements. These are aspects addressed in this year's annual report.

Among the key successes of last year have been:

- The preparation of a single issue local development plan on retailing and town centres which got to the stage of being operational for strategic decision making within 9 months of commencement;
- Supporting the development of Prestwick aerospace cluster and development of an Airport Master Plan to support future space growth aspirations and Ayrshire Growth Deal;

- Preparing and adopting additional supplementary guidance including guidance on Dark Sky Lighting, Wind Energy and Housing Design and Housing Land Supply;
- Introducing modernised monitoring of strategic developments to monitor risk;
- Undertaking a review of mineral permissions;
- A further reduction in the average time taken to process planning applications;
- Introducing a new two tiered pre-application service to meet differing customer needs;
- Completed determination of a series of planning applications to enable Corton, a strategic development, to commence work in 16/17;
- Developed a protocol to advise Councillors on how to engage with planning applications.

The Planning Service continues to work closely with partners on a range of economic initiatives and partnerships and during the year this has included supporting:

- The development of an "Ayrshire Growth Deal" to lever future funding to support investment in key infrastructure within Ayrshire;

- The regeneration of Ayr town centre;
- Major investment in tourism and renewal infrastructure;
- The development of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.

Also of significance, since the publication of last year's report there has been a major review of the planning system in Scotland. The findings from this review challenge planning services to:

- Promote strong and flexible development plans;
- The delivery of more high quality homes;
- An infrastructure first approach to planning and development;
- Efficient and transparent development management;
- Strong leadership, smarter resourcing and sharing of skills;
- Collaboration rather than conflict-inclusion and empowerment

These outcomes are areas which the planning service is committed to working toward their achievement and will review current arrangements in 2016/17.

Development Planning

On 17th March 2015, the Council approved the commencement of a single issue local development plan for town centres and retailing. This sets out the Council's vision for its town centres, and, particularly Ayr town centre, as the largest town centre in South Ayrshire. It also set out the policies that affect retail developments in and out of town centres. The Council approved for public consultation the Town Centre Retail Proposed LDP [PLDP] on 17th December 2015.

The consultation on this document closed in February 2016 and has now been submitted to the Scottish Ministers for examination. (29th April 2016). Pending the outcome of this examination, the Council is on target to adopt these changes by November 2016. The plan became operational in December 2015.

A full development plan review has also commenced. Further details of this will be published shortly and will include a full development plan scheme and consultation arrangements. These arrangements will ensure that the Council will be in a position to adopt a new LDP by September 2019 (within 5 years of the current adopted date, September 2014).

New supplementary planning guidance and updated guidance was also produced and adopted during 2015 and 2016. These include guidance on wind energy, housing design, dark sky lighting, and housing land supply. The current range of supplementary planning

guidance documents can be viewed [online](#).

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs

Within South Ayrshire land is available for 9010 housing units (Established Land Supply) and there is a projected effective 5 year housing supply of 2899 units, this exceeds the Local Development Plan land target of 2545 by some 354 units. Consents were issued for 296 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 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 988 applications in 2015/16. This can be broken down as 697 planning applications and 291 other consents (e.g. listed building, advertisements and others). This was a drop by 11% in volume of planning applications/consents from 2014/15 which was 1113. South Ayrshire however remains one of the busier planning authorities of its type in Scotland in terms of the volume of planning applications/consents.

Over 2015/16 the number of major planning applications remained similar to 2014/15. The rate at which these have been determined has however increased from 26 weeks to 43 weeks. This is above the national average and represents a decline from previous performance. This decline is attributed to the time taken to process two wind farm applications; their submission predated the use of processing agreements by the service. However 60% of all other major applications during this period were processed within 17 weeks, significantly below the national average.

Local and householder developments decreased from 726 in 2014/15 to 687 in 2015/16 with the overall average time taken to determine applications continuing to be under 2 months. The number of local applications determined within two months has significantly improved from 79.5% in 2014/15 to 90.4% in 2015/16. The time taken to determine local applications (non-householder) has decreased from 8.7 weeks to 7

weeks and in terms of householder applications this has decreased from 7.1 weeks to 5.9 weeks. This significant improvement has been a result of a combination of a decrease in applications in the last year and the effectiveness of filling of key posts within the planning service.

In terms of applications, pre-app advice was given on almost a quarter of all applications submitted (23%). This is a marked increase on 2014/15 (+18%).

Processing Agreements

The Council encourages the use of processing agreements for; all major development applications; larger renewable energy applications and for complex or potentially contentious local applications within smaller communities. The benefits of using processing agreements include:

- Greater transparency in decision-making for everyone involved in the process;
- Greater predictability and certainty over the timing of key stages;
- Faster decision-making;
- Clearer lines of communication between the Council and applicant;
- More effective and earlier engagement of key stakeholders;
- Ensure that information requirements are proportionate and reasonable

Ten processing agreements were put in place during this year, with 100% of them meeting the

agreed timescale. This is on par with the previous year where there were also ten, and again they all met the agreed timescale. The council provides guidance and a draft agreement for developers [online](#). Processing agreements are published with application details on the E-planning website.

Legacy Cases

South Ayrshire has no applications which were validated prior to 3rd August 2009. There are 4 applications which have been validated for more than a year (as of March 2016) 4 were cleared within the 2015/16. Those outstanding are subject to processing agreements agreed with the applicant.

Enforcement

The number of breaches identified was 176 and the number resolved was 199. [A total of 7 notices were served](#). This is a drop from 2014/15 when 246 breaches were identified, 216 resolved and 8 notices were served. This drop is in part due to the introduction of a new [Enforcement Charter](#). In line with government guidance this sets out when action can and can't be taken. The charter was adopted in January 2016 with the next review due in 2017/18. **A major workstream is being progressed in 2016/17 to inform the next charter.**

National Headline Indicators

| Key Outcomes | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Development Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i> • Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) • Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) • Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) | <p>18 months (LDP adopted September 2014)</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> | <p>6 months</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| <p>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established housing land supply • 5-year effective housing land supply • 5-year housing supply target • 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) • Housing approvals • Housing completions over the last 5 years • Marketable employment land supply • Employment land take-up during reporting year | <p>9010 units</p> <p>2899 units</p> <p>2545 units</p> <p>5.7 years</p> <p>268 units</p> <p>1002 units</p> <p>Not surveyed</p> <p>Not surveyed</p> | <p>9137 units</p> <p>2925 units</p> <p>2545 units</p> <p>5.7 years</p> <p>202 units</p> <p>867 units</p> <p>Availability of employment land: 141ha, representing 21% of total land</p> |

| Key Outcomes | 2015-16 | 2014-15 |
|--|---|--|
| Development Management Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice • Number of major applications subject to processing agreement • Number of applications subject to other project plan • Percentage planned timescales met Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application approval rate • Delegation rate | 23% 10 0 100% 93.3% 97.5% | 5% 10 XX 100% 92.7% 95.5% |
| Decision-making timescales Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major developments • Local developments (non-householder) • Householder developments | 42.6 7.0 5.9 | 26.0 8.7 7.1 |
| Legacy Cases (see text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number cleared during reporting period • Number remaining | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i> • number of breaches identified / resolved | 2 months (charter updated and approved January 2016) 174/199 | 19 months 246/216 |

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

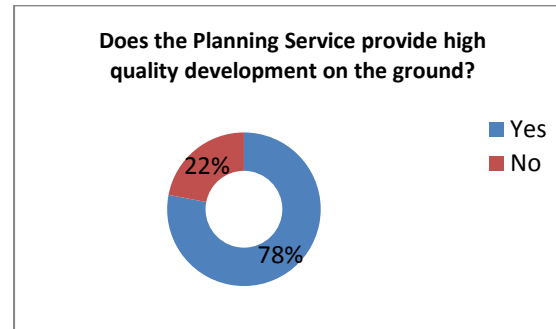
South Ayrshire Council is committed to offering an effective Planning Service that supports sustainable economic growth and promotes high quality development.

To achieve these outcomes engaging with the public and the development industry on an ongoing basis is seen as a vital part of the service offered.

As part of this commitment the Planning Service has recently reviewed and refocused its [pre-application enquiry service in 2015/16](#). Pre application advice is offered in a bid to allow applications to be fine-tuned prior to submission-saving time and money for all parties whilst also ensuring development plan criteria can be met.

High quality development is also guided through the Local Development Plan policies [Supplementary Guidance](#) and planning policy advice notes.

These now provide developers with a range of advice which includes standards for Rural Housing, the Historic Environment, the Alteration and Extension to Houses, wind energy development and protection of Dark Skies. All represent significant progress in guidance designed to capitalise and maintain the environmental quality of South Ayrshire, a key asset on which the economy is based.



Adding Value

Negotiated improvements to planning applications and value added by the Planning Service as evidenced by Appendix 2: “Value added by the planning service to “major” planning applications demonstrate that in all major developments there was an improvement and value over and above that involved with simply progressing the application in the “regulatory way”.

With local developments added value is more difficult to measure. However, a good indicator of added value can be provided by looking at the number of planning applications that would have been refused had they not been withdrawn and then resubmitted, taking into account negotiations and advice to change the proposal and secure an approval. Three quarters of planning applications that would have been refused, as submitted, were subsequently approved.



Source: [Ayr Riverside Development Framework](#)

Case Study 1

Symington Residential Development

The Symington Residential development was a site allocated for housing in the Local Development Plan, with a capacity for 100 units. The site is adjacent to a conservation area and a number of listed buildings, meaning sensitive development is a must. A design brief was developed which guided the design principles for the development. This ensured that the development respected heritage sensitivities and provides high quality, permeable, inclusive development, respecting its place in the townscape.

Extensive pre-application engagement was undertaken with the applicant to secure high quality development. This included the outward facing street frontage to the Main Street, and a vehicular/walking/cycling connection through to an existing development – something that was initially resisted by the applicant.

Further to this, 36 Affordable Housing Units in a range of sizes and designs are to be included in the development, an education contribution was secured, and comprehensive traffic mitigation measures for the village centre. Both applications on the site were subject to processing agreements, and were determined within the terms set out in the agreements (including conclusion of the legal agreement) and the most recent application was determined in less than the statutory time period.

“Our experience of working with South Ayrshire Council pre and during planning applications has been positive during the last few years. Symington proved to be no different and the use of a processing agreement further helped aid the progress of our development proposals. The case officer, Austin Cooke, was good to work with and gave clear and timeous advice.”

MacTaggart & Mickel Homes

© MacTaggart & Mickel Homes



Case Study 2

Spirit AeroSystems Europe Ltd – Glasgow Prestwick Airport

Spirit AeroSystems is a global company that designs and builds aerostructures for both commercial and defence customers. A requirement was identified to expand the current premises at Glasgow Prestwick Airport. Through early engagement, advice was given to ensure certainty throughout the planning process. Following approval, amendments were required and again through discussions with the Planning Service these applications could be dealt with timeously.

“From the earliest discussions, comments on the proposals were positive, bringing confidence to the Client team, with the outcome consistent with the earlier dialogue.”

Robert Morris, Hypostyle Architects.

© Hypostyle Architects



Case Study 3

Lochlea Farm – Distillery and Visitor Facility

An application was received for the part change of use of the B Listed Lochlea Farm to a distillery with associated visitor and interpretation facilities. The farm is listed due to its association with Robert Burns, who lived and worked at the farm when his father was tenant.

Pre-application advice was given on an original design in October. However concerns were expressed:

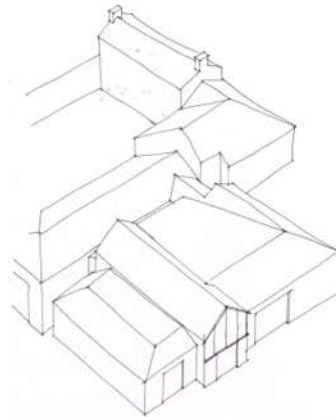
'I would offer no objection to the principle of the re-use of the out-buildings... However, I do have concerns in relation to the proposed distillery area, in that it takes the form of a very tall building which sits in the foreground of, and above adjacent steading buildings.'

'The large height, scale and massing... detract from the setting and integrity of the B listed steading'.

Following this advice significant changes to the scheme were submitted. Instead of a new distillery and visitor centre being built separately from the farm buildings, it was proposed to relocate the distillery within an existing courtyard and to convert the underused farm buildings to the visitor centre. This allows the development to tap into the historical significance of the site without detracting from the setting of the listed building.

Through early engagement and pre-application advice it was possible to facilitate this proposal and direct the right kind of development at this site. It allows the diversification of the existing farm business and creates tourist attraction to enhance the economy of South Ayrshire.

© Organic Architects



QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

Project Management

A key element of the spatial strategy within the LDP is to provide the right conditions to help regenerate South Ayrshire's town centres and keep them vibrant, while also conserving their historic character.

Since approval of the LDP the changes in retailing and the patterns and trends evidenced by regular monitoring indicated that a full and early review of retail policies was necessary.

The [review](#) also had the advantage in that it could take into account a number of emerging corporate strategic issues and provide an opportunity to create a clear vision and strategy for the regeneration of Ayr Town Centre, including modelling of traffic and the development work of Ayr Renaissance. The Council approved a challenging development plan scheme timetable for the preparation and adoption of a Town Centre LDP in March 2015.

The Council project-managed the preparation of the Council's Town Centre LDP review through the establishment of an [LDP Project Board](#) and sought to build on the previous experience. The proposed LDP was submitted to the Scottish Ministers for examination on 29 April 2016.

Action Programming

In addition to promoting the regeneration of town centres, the [LDP Action Programme](#) sets

out further priorities which include actions to deliver key infrastructure and the preparation of supporting supplementary guidance. These actions support the delivery of economic opportunities centred on the delivery of housing, the development of Prestwick Airport, transport improvements and the development of the assets on which the rural economy of South Ayrshire is based. Progress against these actions is published on the Council's [website](#).

Innovation – LDP Storytelling

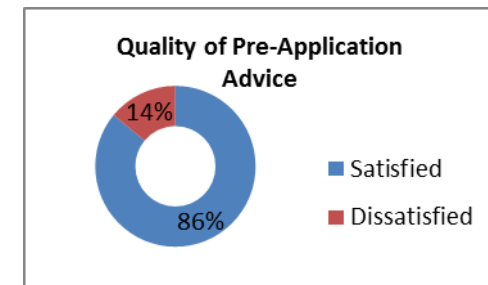
The brief was to develop an [online development plan](#) that would be engaging, novel and interesting to users. The project from concept and scoping stage through development and review proved ground breaking. The project went live in March 2016 and has been met with enthusiasm and recognition. During the first month online viewing of the LDP was exceptional, in excess of the previous full years viewing of the LDP.

Pre Application Advice & Legal Agreements

The planning service has reviewed and refocused its [pre-application enquiry service in 2015/16](#). To provide greater certainty for prospective applicants a chargeable pre-application service is now available that enables to ensure a more rigorous and detailed preliminary assessment of tentative planning proposals, including site meetings. However to continue an open door approach to the Service, prospective applicants

still have access to a freely available pre-app service without charge.

The council continues to work with applicants to decrease the time spent on applications with associated legal agreements. The council has begun to roll out the use of standard templates in conjunction with legal services. The use of standard definitions is also being developed. Furthermore, with the review of the pre-application process, advice on the consideration of legal agreements can be given at the earliest opportunity. Last year there was one application which was subject to a legal agreement. This was determined in 4.3 weeks. Significantly lower than the national average of 44 weeks.

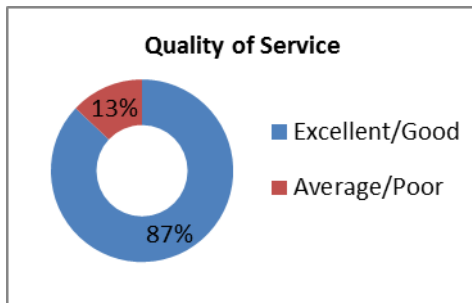


Communications & Customer Service Customer Service Charter

It is the Council's aim to deliver an excellent level of customer service across all Council services. The [Council's Customer Charter](#) sets out the standards employees are required to provide to customers of the service. The charter focusses on

providing open communication with applicants as they engage with the planning process within South Ayrshire whilst also ensuring any complaints they may have are dealt with timeously and satisfactorily.

The Planning Service operates the Council's Comments and Complaints Management Policy. It does not consider there to be a need to devise a service specific complaints policy. In 2015/16, the Planning Service received 6 complaints, three of the complaints were partially upheld and three were not upheld. This is a drop of three from the previous year, 2014/15. The three complaints that were partially upheld were assessed to establish if service improvements could be made to avoid any reoccurrence, but all involved unique issues so no improvement actions were identified as a result of these complaints.

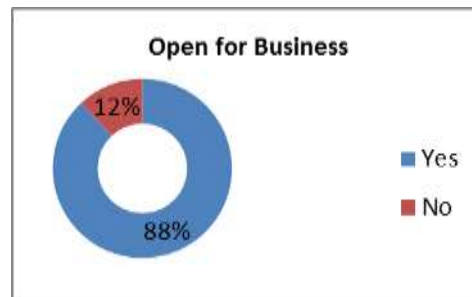


Architects' Forum

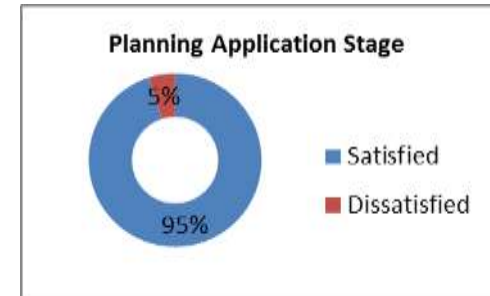
The Architects Forum is an open network of Architects and agents that operate within South Ayrshire. The forum is to disseminate information and encourage discussion. It has been active since 2003 but interest has been in decline since 2010. This could be due to more effective use of the Council's website.

Planning Forum

The Planning Forum is a group of residents of South Ayrshire which the Planning Service consults on the development of planning policy. Through a series of workshops and meetings, Forum members have provided feedback, which has helped identify key issues and influence policy direction for the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance, as well as providing commentary on the quality of the Planning Service. **A major project is being undertaken in 16/17 to refresh the Forum with a view to encouraging greater participation through use of social media, including a Facebook group, which could host online discussions, comment boards, questionnaires and polls. This will also include a review of the Architects Forum.**



A customer satisfaction survey recorded that 95% of applicants were very satisfied or satisfied with the planning application service that was provided.



**Case Study 4: Wind Energy
Certainty**

Planning authorities have a key role in delivering national commitments and supporting infrastructure that promotes a low carbon economy. Attracted by a good wind resource proposals for renewable energy have the potential to change significantly the use of land within South Ayrshire. A planned approach, guiding future wind energy projects to appropriate locations, helps ensure that multi million pound investments can be taken forward with confidence whilst also ensuring wider interests important to local communities are recognised and safeguarded.

The guidance also provides for robust management of potential environmental risks. With these management arrangements being underpinned by this guidance this should go a long way to building community confidence that potential environmental risks are being robustly managed and risk minimised.

“The Scottish Government were recently issued with a Notice of Intention to Adopt Supplementary Guidance on Wind Energy for South Ayrshire. We were impressed with the content and format of the document and its compliance with national policy, guidance and advice.

As such we believe this [Supplementary Guidance](#) to be a good example of how wind energy guidance should be produced.” Michael Westwater, SG Blog.



GOVERNANCE

Managing Resources

The Planning Service has a management structure that is fit for purpose and ensures that the planning service operates in an integrated manner across the two principal service areas of Development Planning and Development Management.

A mobile staff structure also ensures that staff can be deployed where pressures or new priorities demand additional resource. Work programmes and priorities are monitored (appendix 1) and managed through reporting on the Council service improvement plan and through weekly planning management team meetings.

The planning service continues to manage resources efficiently.

- i. Resources are aligned to deliver the priorities of the development plan and [Action Programme](#);
- ii. Service standards ensure that time and resources are proportionate to the value added from the planning process;
- iii. Corporate efficiency savings are met through income generation and resource management; examples include the introduction of fees for pre application advice.

Efficient & Effective Decision Making

During the year South Ayrshire Council continued to process applications efficiently with over 90%

of local applications being determined in less than 2 months.

In the last year the overall average time taken to determine local applications fell by over a week from around eight weeks (7.9) to just over six weeks (6.4). This is significantly below the national average of 9.8 weeks. This was achieved by means of an effective scheme of delegation, 97.5% of applications were determined under delegated powers, the national figure for Scotland being 94.9%, a development team structured so that cases are determined at the most appropriate level within the Service. Case officers report to senior case officers who authorise delegated decisions. Additionally, a Development Management Protocol promotes early decision making

As reported earlier the average time taken to determine major developments increased to 42.6. This increase from previous years is attributed to the processing of two wind farm applications which pre-dated the use of processing agreements of the remaining major applications all were determined in under 17 weeks, significantly below the national average of 30 weeks.

Online Applications

Submitting applications online also helps speed up the process, while also ensuring a more transparent service- in 2015/16 86% of applications

were submitted online this is a fall/rise from previous years

Validation

One of the main reasons for delay in the planning application process is because the planning application was not able to be validated at first submission. Guidance notes are provided with the planning application pack, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application submitted meets with statutory requirements. 52.7% of planning applications were unable to be validated at first submission. This compares with 40.2% in 14/15, 55% in 13/14 and 69.8%. This is a reversal of the good progress in past years but remains an improvement on 14/15 when action was taken through the Architects Forum to address. **A review will be initiated to examine the reasons for this recent dip.** The approval rate has stayed similar, 93.3% compared to 92.7% in 2014/15.

Value for Money

The costing the planning service undertaken by the Improvement Service on behalf of Heads of Planning Scotland in 2014/15 benchmarked South Ayrshire planning service with other planning authorities in Scotland. While acknowledging there were limitations in the exercise, they demonstrated at the time a cost efficient service within South Ayrshire planning department.

- Costs per application received were the 2nd lowest in Scotland (£694);

- Costs per capita were significantly below the national average at £13.36;
- Fee income as a percentage of the total cost of the planning service was the highest in Scotland (68%).

These recent figures suggest this is still the case.

When these relatively low costs are compared with our relatively high performance across the full range of headline indicators, a view could be reached that we are continuing to provide a highly performing planning service at best value. Local Review Bodies

Decision Making

Consistency of decision making is important in providing confidence and certainty to the local residents and to investors. Decisions of the Local Review Body are monitored. South Ayrshire Council had 17 applications referred to its Local Review Body. The original decision was upheld in just over a third of the cases (35.3%), this is below the national average which is around 60%. In 2012/13 almost three quarters of decisions were upheld.

Appeals to Scottish Ministers

10 decisions by the Council were appealed to Scottish Ministers, of these 50% were upheld. Since 2012/13 the number of appeals upheld by Ministers with South Ayrshire has decreased from around three quarters (78%) to around a half. This is a trend reflected nationally in decision made across Scotland.

Collaboration

During the last year the service has continued to strengthen collaborative arrangements with other Ayrshire Councils and Dumfries & Galloway through corporate, inter agency and partnership working. This is illustrated by involvement in the Ayrshire Growth Deal, Prestwick Aerospace/Spaceport bid, Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Galloway Forestry Forum and, Central Scotland Green Network. Notable collaborative projects last year included:

- [Ayrshire Riverside Development Framework](#)
- Preparing an indicative land use framework to complement a space port bid at Prestwick
- Supporting the development of a “Growth Deal” for Ayrshire
- Supporting a review of Vacant & Derelict Land opportunities within [Ayrshire](#) by CSGNT
- Undertaking a “Charrette” process to support the physical regeneration of Maybole and Prestwick.
- Working closely with neighbouring authorities on the preparation of [Dark Skies Supplementary Guidance](#)
- Working with Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere to develop a “[Natural Heritage Management Plan](#)”.

Stream Lining Planning Appraisals

The Council is strongly committed to front-loading the planning process with pre-application advice; providing greater certainty for prospective applicants. This avoids the need to make repeated amendments during the consideration of applications and as a consequence makes for expediency in decision making.

Last year we reported on the involvement in the national project to streamline assessments.

The Council’s involvement in a national project was the catalyst for the Planning service to critically reflect on its consultative relationship with an internal service department and how ‘fit for purpose’ established processes within the Council were for delivering the correct advice to applicants and at the right time.

An outcome was a review of how Environmental Health engages with the planning process and how they could optimise their involvement at both ‘pre’ and ‘post’ applications stages.

The project explored through ‘change management’ techniques, how the regulatory role of two Council service functions could compliment and assist the delivery of either service. This was found to be beneficial to both parties and to those seeking to invest in South Ayrshire.

This year it is proposed to “re-run” the process with other service departments, commencing with the [Council’s shared road service](#).

Case Study 5: Shared Services

[West of Scotland Archaeology Service](#)

The Council continued to be a key member of the award-winning West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS); a local authority shared service delivering curatorial and planning-related archaeology advice to 10 local authorities and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority within west and central Scotland. WoSAS maintains the Historic Environment Record (HER) for each member authority, making information from it freely available to the public online. The Service supports member authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities for the historic environment, which largely arise through the planning system. In addition to responding to consultations from member planning services

on planning applications and development plans, WoSAS's award winning Archaeological Impact Mitigation System assists in the efficient processing of planning applications by screening weekly lists to identify, and seek early consultation on, proposals that might have implications for archaeology. WoSAS further facilitates sustainable development by providing information and advice to other council departments, developers and their agents. It also liaises with national agencies on heritage matters, and participates, on behalf of the member authorities, in various working groups such as the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site working group, the National Parks Historic Environment Working Group, the Scottish SMR Forum, and the Regional Archaeological Research Framework for Argyll working group.



Buried Citadel Gate, Ayr

Case Study 6: Collaboration

Supplementary Guidance – Dark Sky Lighting

The Galloway Forest Park received Gold Tier Dark Sky Park Status from the International Dark Sky Association in 2009 due to the exceptional quality of the night sky. The Dark Skies project is in partnership with the Forestry Commission, East Ayrshire Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Council. The purpose of the Dark Skies policy within South Ayrshire Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) and the Supplementary Guidance is then to protect the dark sky quality and, therefore the status of the Park, from

development which would result in light spillage or lighting levels that would adversely affect that quality or status, of the Dark Sky Environment.

The Dark Sky Park provides a tourist attraction for the south west of Scotland, particularly in winter months due to its unique and clear astronomy viewing opportunities. There is a considerable opportunity to boost tourism further and planning policies in the LDP encourage sustainable and sympathetic development to provide facilities for tourists and strengthen and expand rural businesses within the Park and an area of 10 miles outwith of the Park.



CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Corporate working and Service Improvement Plan

The Planning Service works within the Council's "How Good is our Council Framework" (HGIOC) and over the last year has undertaken a robust self-evaluation against quality indicators within this framework. A number of improvements were identified and these are being taken forward both within the Service Improvement Plan and within supporting Planning Service Team Plans. They include:

- considering ways which spatial planning can be better integrated with community planning;
- Improving community engagement;
- and strengthen effective relationships with key agencies.

These improvements are reflected in Part 4.

The service plan was published during the year and covers the period 2016-18. It identifies challenges and how they are to be met. By planning and monitoring progress we aim to contribute to the achievement of the Council's Plan 2016-18 and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-23.

Seminar Series

As part of an ongoing drive for continuous improvement and professional development the

Planning Service continued its series of monthly 'HGIOC' seminars. All planning staff are invited and the seminars last approximately an hour. The programme for the 2015/16 included the following topics:

- Outdoor Access and Planning;
- Retail and Town Centres Local Development Plan;
- Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance;
- Land Restoration Developments Review;
- Business Transformation and Idox;
- Environmental Assessment in the Planning System;
- Place Making

The programme continues to be popular amongst staff, demonstrated by high attendance at all events.

Ad hoc training in terms of conference attendance, Council training, COAST system, and at individual team meetings is encouraged. Examples last year included VOICE community engagement and EqIA presentations. The Planning Service continues to support professional development training and RTPi membership amongst professional staff.

Personal Development Reviews

All staff undergo an annual personal review which is updated on a six monthly basis. This also provides an opportunity to assess future training needs.

Service Workshops

The service continued its series of annual workshops, these seek staff views on service improvements. These views help inform the council service improvement plan and identify improvements for inclusion in the PPF for the forthcoming year, as well as general management actions and improvements.

PART 3: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

[Local Development Plan](#)

[Supplementary Guidance](#)

[LDP Action Programme](#)

[LDP Action Programme Monitoring](#)

[Review of Development Management – Peer Review Report January 2012](#)

[Service Standard Major Developments](#)

[Pre-application form and guidance](#)

[Pre-application Protocol Guidance](#)

[Enforcement Charter](#)

[Planning Protocol Prestwick Enterprise Area](#)

[National Planning Protocol Enterprise Areas](#)

[General Guidance Notes for applicants and Agents on the Processing of Planning Applications](#)

[Guidance Notes for Pre-application Consultation for Developers](#)

[Protocol for Planning Liaison with Key Internal Stakeholders on Planning Applications for Major and National Developments \(Draft\)](#)

[Documentation Supporting Planning Applications Guidance](#)

[Service Standard for Local Developments and Major Developments](#)

[Ayrshire Green Network Partnership](#)

[Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#)

Customer Experience Report 2015-2016

Improvement Service and Heads of Planning - Costing the Planning Service

[Enterprise, Development, and Leisure Service Improvement Plan 2016-18](#)

PART 4: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- 1 Review the Planning Service and associated functions based on the outcome of any new Scottish Planning guidance/recommendations emerging from the review of the planning system.
- 2 Develop spatial planning and community planning links through shared consultation and regular reporting to CPP Board and LDP Board.
- 3 Refresh the Planning Forum and the Architects Forum.
- 4 Engage Planning Aid Scotland and the Youth Forum to facilitate community engagement with young people during the forthcoming LDP2 review.
- 5 Undertake a sample survey of organisations/individuals that participated in Local Development 1 and seek their views on future participation in drafting LDP2.
- 6 Review the Planning Protocol for public consultation with a view to encouraging greater participation, through use of social media, including a Facebook group, which could host online discussions, comment boards, questionnaires and poll.
- 7 Undertake a review as to the reasons for the dip in online validation.
- 8 Introduce software facility to submit tree works applications online.
- 9 Introduce High Hedge Charter and publish register of High Hedge Notice applications online.
- 10 Work to inform next enforcement charter:
 - Spot check review of NIDs and certificates of completion
 - Proactive spot check monitoring of completion certificates and review against approved planning permission
 -
- 11 Publish tree works application as standard.
- 12 Introduce Access Charter and publish outdoor access enquiries standard.

13 Complete review of LRB arrangements.

14 Complete review of Planning Procedure Note.

15 Review and implement 'Major Development Tracker'.

16 Review Council Scheme of Delegation related to access, TPO, and other delegations.

17 Complete Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education.

18 Continue to improve and review the content of the Planning pages of the Council's web site

Committed Improvements and Actions - Table

| Committed improvements and actions | Complete? (Yes/No) |
|---|--|
| 1. Undertake a review of Regulatory Panel procedures | Yes- substantially complete following work with Legal Services and Chair of Panel. Procedure note to be published August 2016. New protocol for Councillor engagement in planning applications approved. |
| 2. Undertake a review of Local Review Body procedures | Yes – as above. |
| 3. Engage Planning Aid Scotland for forthcoming review to facilitate community engagement with young people | No- This is now scheduled for 2016-17, and reflects a revised programme for LDP2 with a prominent role being given to the Youth Forum. |
| 4. Increase the use of social media to improve communications with a wider audience | Yes and ongoing- carried forward as an action in 2016-17 |
| 5. Continue to improve and review the content of the Planning pages of the Council's web site | Yes- and ongoing- carried forward as an action in 2016-17 |
| 6. Undertake a sample survey of organisations/individuals that participated in Local Development Process | No-a consultation strategy is being developed for LDP2. The views of previous participants in the LDP process will be sought on its content. |
| 7. Strengthen and develop effective relationships and partnerships with key agencies. | Yes-demonstrated by the involvement of the Planning service in major economic and regeneration initiatives –Prestwick Airport/Ayrshire Growth Deal/Town Centres/Spaceport/Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere/Clyde Marine Planning |
| 8. Review the Planning Protocol for public consultation | No |
| 9. Review the effectiveness of the architects liaison group | Yes. |
| 10. Work with the Enterprise Service to develop a protocol of communication between both services on inward investment opportunities/projects | Yes. |
| 11. Introduce software to monitor compliance of planning conditions, including bond reviews. | Yes- supported by training to widen access to the module. |

PART 5: OFFICIAL STATISTICS

| South Ayrshire ^{1,2} | | | 2015/16 |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------|
| | | Post-3rd August 2009 applications = All applications | |
| | | | |
| MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| Without Legal Agreement | 5 | 42.6 | |
| With Legal Agreement | 0 | - | |
| | | | |
| MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| All Major Developments | 5 | 42.6 | |
| Minerals | 0 | - | |
| Housing | 0 | - | |
| Business and Industry | 2 | 17.0 | |
| Waste Management | 0 | - | |
| Electricity Generation | 2 | 81.4 | |
| Freshwater Fish Farming | 0 | - | |
| Marine Finfish Farming | 0 | - | |
| Marine Shellfish Farming | 0 | - | |
| Other Developments | 1 | 16.3 | |
| | | | |
| LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| Without Legal Agreement | 687 | 6.4 | |
| With Legal Agreement | 0 | - | |
| | | | |

| LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | Proportion of Decisions |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| All Local Developments | 687 | 6.4 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 621 | 5.9 | 90.4% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 66 | 11.8 | 9.6% |
| Local Developments (non-householder) | 314 | 7.0 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 267 | 6.2 | 85.0% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 47 | 12.1 | 15.0% |
| Householder Developments | 373 | 5.9 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 354 | 5.7 | 94.9% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 19 | 10.9 | 5.1% |
| Housing | 76 | 7.7 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 62 | 6.7 | 81.6% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 14 | 12.3 | 18.4% |
| Business & Industry | 64 | 6.9 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 58 | 6.1 | 90.6% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 6 | 14.5 | 9.4% |
| Other Developments | 151 | 6.6 | |
| Local: Less than 2 months | 133 | 5.8 | 88.1% |
| Local: More than 2 months | 18 | 12.5 | 11.9% |
| | | | |
| LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | % Under 2 months |
| Minerals | 0 | - | - |
| Waste Management | 0 | - | - |
| Electricity Generation | 9 | 7.7 | 66.7% |
| Freshwater Fish Farming | 0 | - | - |
| Marine Finfish Farming | 0 | - | - |
| Marine Shellfish Farming | 0 | - | - |
| Telecommunications | 12 | 7.9 | 66.7% |
| AMSCs (under 2 months) | 2 | 10.6 | 0.0% |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| OTHER CONSENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| All Other Consents | 291 | 5.2 | |
| Listed bldg.+con.area consents | 96 | 7.3 | |
| Advertisements | 61 | 4.8 | |
| Hazardous substances consents | 1 | 7.0 | |
| Other consents and certificates | 133 | 3.9 | |
| | | | |
| ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| Local Developments Subject To EIA | 0 | - | |
| AMSCs (Subject to EIA) | 0 | - | |
| | | | |
| APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO | Total number of decisions | Average time (weeks) | |
| Planning/Legal Agreement | 1 | 4.3 | |
| Local Review | 17 | 10.0 | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| PROCESSING AGREEMENTS | Total number of decisions | % within agreed timescales | |
| All Processing Agreements | 10 | 100.0% | |
| Major applications | 8 | 100.0% | |
| Local Applications | 2 | 100.0% | |
| EIA developments | 0 | - | |
| Other consents | 0 | - | |
| | | | |
| APPLICATIONS APPROVED / DELEGATED | Percentage | | |
| Percentage of Applications Approved | 93.3% | | |
| Percentage of Applications Delegated | 97.5% | | |

| LOCAL REVIEWS and APPEALS | Total number of decisions | Original decision upheld (%) | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Local Review | 17 | 35.3% | |
| Appeals to Scottish Ministers | 10 | 50.0% | |
| | | | |
| ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY | Number | | |
| Cases Taken Up | 174 | | |
| Notices Served | 7 | | |
| Reports to Procurator Fiscal | 0 | | |
| Prosecutions | 0 | | |
| Number of breaches resolved | 199 | | |

PART 6: WORKFORCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

| | Tier 1 | Tier 2 | Tier 3 | Tier 4 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Head of Planning Service | | | | |

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

| | | DM | DP | Enforce- ment | Other |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Managers | No. Posts | | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| Main grade posts | No. Posts | | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| Technician | No. Posts | | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| Office Support/Clerical | No. Posts | | | | |
| | Vacant | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | |

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

| Staff Age Profile | Number |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Under 30 | |
| 30-39 | |
| 40-49 | |
| 50 and over | |

| Committee & Site Visits* | Number per year |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Full council meetings | 3 |
| Planning committees | 13 |
| Area committees (where relevant) | |
| Committee site visits | 0 |
| LRB** | 12 |
| LRB site visits | 7 |

Notes:

**References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.*

***this relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.*

| | Total Budget | Costs | | Income*** |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | Direct* | Indirect** | |
| Development management | 260,947 | 875,949 | 2,455 | 530,371 |
| Development planning | 406,807 | 352,790 | 3,563 | - |
| Enforcement | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 108,444 | 110,623 | 510 | 1,892 |
| TOTAL | 776,198 | 1,339,362 | 6,528 | 532,263 |

Notes:

** Direct staff costs covers gross par (including overtime, national insurance and superannuation contribution). The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs, irrespective of what department they are allocated to (for example, legal advice, administration, typing). Exclude staff spending less than 30% of their time on planning.*

***Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to the planning service. Examples (not exhaustive) include accommodation, IT, stationery, office equipment, telephone charges, printing, advertising, travel & subsistence, apportionment of support service costs.*

**** Include fees from planning applications and deemed applications, and recharges for advertising costs etc. Exclude income from property and planning searches.*

Appendix 1: Rolling Log of Priority Projects – Reporting Year 2015-16

| Theme # | LDP priority theme | 2015-16 Projects promoting theme |
|---------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Housing development in HLS | 14 |
| 2 | Promote and enhance town centres | 3 |
| 3 | Promote Ayr Renaissance project | 0 |
| 4 | Promote 'Major Regeneration of South Carrick' project | 2 |
| 5 | Promote Ayr and Troon Ports | 0 |
| 6 | Reuse vacant land | 9 |
| 7 | Promote the airport/aerospace | 0 |
| 8 | Promote major commercial/industrial development & community amenities within core investment towns | 9 |
| 9 | Promote rural economy, tourism and community amenities | 10 |
| 10 | Strategic transport improvements | 1 |

Explanatory notes:

- a) The *Rolling Log of Priority Projects* includes 'local' category development, as defined by the hierarchy, which is nevertheless considered to be a business priority for the Council.
- b) Key Local Development Plan priorities were themed into the ten categories shown for the purposes of aligning priority projects.
- c) The log details 36 proposals where core planning work was concluded as at close of reporting year 2015-16. This includes projects in hiatus i.e. Pre-application leads with no substantiating follow-through planning application.
- d) The above-noted theme promotion matrix will not sum with the latter proposal total as many proposals are identified as promoting more than one priority theme.
- e) Not all proposals contributed to the promotion of priorities: some proposals were withdrawn (4 no.), not pursued beyond Proposal of Application Notice stage (1 no.) or refused thereby safeguarding provisions of LDP policy (3 no.).
- f) Proposals promoting LDP priorities do not automatically equate to those priorities having been delivered by development: the projects have either been enabled by permission (but not necessarily implemented as at reporting year-end), or else the projects are being developed/facilitated in conjunction with the Service at pre-application enquiry stage.

APPENDIX 2: VALUE ADDED BY THE PLANNING SERVICE TO 'MAJOR' PLANNING APPLICATIONS

'Added value' seeks to measure the extent to which the planning application process negotiates improvements or secures more value rather achieving this by simply processing the planning application in a regulatory manner. It attempts to measure the value that has been added by the Planning Service (and other supporting services e.g. Legal) to a planning application over and above the proposals that would otherwise have been submitted. At present it is only applications falling within the 'Major' category of development that are the subject of formal 'Added Value' recording by the Planning Service. During the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016, thirteen planning applications falling under the category of Major Development were determined. The table below demonstrates value added (by number) to approved Major Development planning applications during both pre-application and assessment of development proposals.

| Added Value Criteria | No of cases |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Improved Design | 5 |
| Improved Layout | 5 |
| Open space provision | 3 |
| Play facility | 3 |
| Residential amenity | 3 |
| Utility/infrastructure | 5 |
| Visual amenity | 4 |
| Built heritage | 3 |
| Archaeology | 5 |
| Ecology | 5 |
| Landscape | 4 |
| Sustainable Drainage SUDS | 2 |

| Added Value Criteria | No of cases |
|--|-------------|
| Noise mitigation | 1 |
| Flood Mitigation | - |
| Sustainability | 5 |
| Walking/cycling | 6 |
| Road Safety | 5 |
| Sustainable transport | 4 |
| Affordable housing on site | 3 |
| Developer contribution-Affordable housing off site | 3 |
| Developer contribution-Education | 3 |
| Developer contribution-Community Facilities | 3 |
| Aerodrome safeguarding | 1 |

Nine out of the thirteen major planning applications were the subject of formal pre-application engagement, which involves the submission of a pre-application form and supporting documentation and the preparation of a written response by the Planning Service. This outlines policy considerations, procedural requirements, key planning issues and advice on the requirement or otherwise for development contributions. This formal pre-application process is in line with Government advice to 'front load' the planning process to ensure that issues can be identified, considered and addressed as early as possible in the process.

The four major applications which did not have a formal exchange as outlined above, included one windfarm application which separately went through a pre-application Environmental Assessment screening process and three other applications which were all related to one retail park for which there is a lengthy and complex planning history and where the applicant is in continuous dialogue with the Planning Service on an ongoing basis.

The summary table above indicates that value has been added to the various development proposals across a wide range of factors with an emphasis on improvements related to; layout, design, infrastructure, ecology, sustainability and walking / cycling enhancements. As four of the thirteen major applications were refused, 'added value' cannot be attributed to the outcome. However, these applications were refused due to their conflict with the Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance and, in the case of the two windfarm applications, for their direct and unacceptable impacts on the environment. To help provide an illustration of 'added value' a case study is provided in Part 2 of this report for a major residential development at Symington which looks at value added through 'Quality of Outcomes' (quality of development on the ground) and 'Quality of Service and Engagement' (open for business, certainty, communications, engagement and customer service).

