

Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community
Wealth
Tom Arthur MSP



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Carol Beattie
Stirling Council

29 November 2021

Dear Carol Beattie

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's tenth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2020 to March 2021.

This is the first time I have written to you individually in my capacity as Planning Minister since my appointment earlier this year. I am very grateful for the support and welcome I have received and look forward to working with you.

This year has continued to present challenges for people working within planning, in the development sector and across Scotland's communities. We know people are doing the best they can to engage and operate, sometimes in ways and circumstances that may not be ideal, and with many still predominantly working from home. I appreciate that many of you will have had to make difficult choices in what work is prioritised, in much the same way the Government and Planning and Architecture Division has had to. However, we should all be very proud of how planning has responded to the coronavirus pandemic, adjusting as necessary to keep going and supporting recovery. I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for all the work that has been done during the pandemic and to support our ongoing recovery.

When my predecessor wrote to you last year he indicated that the pandemic had required a rethink about the timing and prioritisation of our planning work programme. A number of our workstreams were paused or delayed as a result, including the review of the planning performance and fee regimes, which had been the subject of a detailed consultation that concluded in early 2020. However, in October 2021 we published a revised planning implementation programme (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-planning-practice-updated-planning->

[reform-implementation-programme/](#)). You will note that we have now recommenced our planning performance and fees review, which reflects the importance Scottish Government attaches to this work. We are currently finalising proposals and intend to lay regulations before the end of the year to introduce increased fees, providing a boost to planning authorities' resources. We also intend to commence the recruitment of the National Planning Improvement Coordinator early in 2022.

Turning to the 2020-21 PPF reporting year, although, as expected, there have been some small changes overall in the markings awarded, the figures indicate that performance has remained relatively stable. This is a testament to the hard work and flexibility of authorities during these very difficult times and I believe that overall good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities.

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

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Arthur', written in a cursive style.

Tom Arthur

Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth

CC: Christina Cox

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2020-21

Name of planning authority: **Stirling Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Amber	<p>Major Applications Your average timescale of 47.8 weeks is significantly faster than last year however it is slower than the Scottish Average. RAG = Amber</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your average timescale of 12.6 weeks is slower than the previous year and is slower than the Scottish average of 12.4 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Householder Applications Your average timescale of 7.9 weeks is slower than the previous year but is faster than the Scottish average of 8.1 weeks. However, this is faster than the statutory timescale. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>
2	<p>Processing agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>You continue to encourage processing agreements for all major applications. RAG = Green</p> <p>Processing agreements information is provided on your website. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	Green	<p>You continue to promote pre-application discussions and the positive impact it has n highlighting early planning impacts to applicants. RAG = Green</p> <p>Your case studies help to demonstrate how you ensure that requests for additional information are kept proportionate. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	Green	The annual statistics show that 4 applications were determined in an average time of 28.4 weeks which is faster than the Scottish average. However, your PPF states that 3 applications were determined which were subject to a legal agreement. It is noted that a review of how legal agreements are managed has been initiated.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was 3 months old at the end of the reporting period.
6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	Your LDP and enforcement charter are up to date. Clear timescales exist for adopting the next LDP. Although decision-taking timescales for major and householder applications have improved, you have a significant number of legacy cases outstanding. RAG = Amber You completed 7 out of 24 improvement commitments with 13 underway and 3 not being progressed. You have identified service improvements during the reporting period which are based on customer survey responses. RAG = Amber Overall RAG = Amber
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your LDP was adopted in 2 years 8 months old at the end of the reporting period.
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and • project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Green	A new Development Plan Scheme is currently being prepared to cover the replacement of your LDP under the new Development Planning Legislation. This will include indicative timescales and will be updated as the new regulations and guidance emerge.
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	N/A	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	Green	A range of supplementary guidance is due to be adopted later in 2021 with a review of Developer contributions SG ongoing and expected to be consulted on in 2021/22. Sg programme is currently under review in light of the adoption of the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan.
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact	Green	You have stated that you work closely with other council series to deliver corporate objectives such as economic development, Sustainability, Transportation and Affordable Housing.

	arrangements; joint pre-application advice)		
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	You are working with Falkirk and Clackmannanshire on an iRSS for the Forth Valley Area. You are also represented on the Local Place Plans Benchmarking Group in order to share good practice in relation to Community Planning.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	You have cleared 7 cases during the reporting year, with 18 cases still awaiting conclusion. This is a reduction on last year's figure.
15	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions 	Green	You have developed a developer contributions tool which enables users to insert details of their proposed development and the tool produces a list of likely contributions. RAG = Green The new developer contributions tool is used as part of pre-application discussions. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Green

STIRLING COUNCIL

Performance against Key Markers

Marker		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
1	Decision making timescales								
2	Processing agreements								
3	Early collaboration								
4	Legal agreements								
5	Enforcement charter								
6	Continuous improvement								
7	Local development plan								
8	Development plan scheme								
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications								
12	Corporate working across services								
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge								
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases								
15	Developer contributions								

Overall Markings (total numbers for red, amber and green)

2012-13	2	7	4
2013-14	2	6	5
2014-15	1	4	10
2015-16	0	4	11
2016-17	2	2	9
2017-18	1	3	9
2018-19	1	5	7
2019-20	1	6	6
2020-21	0	2	11

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	2020-21 Scottish Average
Major Development	53.9	97.3	26.4	62.1	57.3	196.0	196.0	47.8	41.3
Local (Non-Householder) Development	12.9	11.8	12.4	12.4	12.2	13.7	11.4	12.6	12.4
Householder Development	7.4	7.5	8.3	7.5	7.0	6.5	7.1	7.9	8.1