

Report To: Environment and Regeneration Committee **Date:** 6 March 2014

Report By: Corporate Director, Environment, Regeneration and Resources **Report No:** E+R/14/03/01/SJ/NM

Contact Officer: Head of Regeneration and Planning **Contact No:** 01475 71240

Subject: Planning Performance Framework 2013: Scottish Government Feedback Report

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Each Scottish Planning Authority published a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) in September 2013. The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the Scottish Government's Feedback Report and on how Inverclyde Council is able to respond.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Government's Feedback Report assesses the Council's PPF against set performance markers, 13 of which are applicable to Inverclyde. Reflecting the Minister's comments and based on the evidence provided within the PPF, Inverclyde has been allocated 5 green ratings, 5 amber and 3 red. The red categories all relate to LDP and Policy adoption; matters currently with the Scottish Executive's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals and are anticipated being resolved by October 2014.
- 2.2 The Minister for Local Government and Planning is encouraged by the "open for business" culture that is evident within the Planning Service and is impressed by the reporting of further reductions in planning application determination times, which are already below the Scottish average in all categories. The Minister is, however, concerned by the age of the Inverclyde Local Plan and wishes to see the Local Development Plan (LDP) complete the process to approval as soon as possible.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the Minister for Local Government and Planning's response to the Council's PPF, the current position relative to the performance markers and the actions to be included in the 2014 PPF.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Each Scottish Planning Authority published a PPF in September 2013, receiving an individual Feedback Report from the Minister of Local Government and Planning.

4.2 The Inverclyde PPF is considered to be a positive and well written report supported by evidence of customer feedback and showing a strong commitment to decision making timescales and an open for business culture. Concern is expressed, however, on the age of the Local Plan and it is stressed as important that all possible steps are taken to avoid delay and adopt the LDP as soon as possible.

4.3 The Scottish Government's Feedback Report assesses the Council's PPF against set performance markers, 13 of which are applicable to Inverclyde. Reflecting the Minister's comments and based on the evidence provided within the PPF, Inverclyde has been allocated 5 green ratings, 5 amber and 3 red.

4.4 Marker 1: Decision Making (Rated Green)

The timescales for determining local development and householder planning applications is much better than the Scottish average. Although there is a slight increase in the timescale for processing major development, this is attributable to legacy cases and is still better than the Scottish average.

Response: Planning application processing continues to be rigidly managed to ensure applications are determined promptly and efficiently.

4.5 Marker 2: Processing Agreements (Rated Amber)

No applications were subject to processing agreements and although they are encouraged on the website, there is not much detail provided.

Response: Only major applications may be the subject of a processing agreement. Only one major application has been submitted in 2013-14 to date, and this is the subject of a processing agreement.

4.6 Marker 3: Early collaboration (Rated Amber)

There has been a reduction in the take up of pre application advice, and there is no evidence as to how early collaboration ensures information requests are reasonable and proportionate.

Response: Pre application advice continues to be available and the website has been updated encouraging use of the service. Evidence of reasonable and proportionate information requests will be provided in the next PPF.

4.7 Marker 4: Legal Agreements (Rated Green)

No applications in 2012-13 were the subject of legal agreements, with all previous cases concluded.

Response: The appropriateness and validity of legal agreements will continue to be considered and offered where appropriate.

4.8 Marker 5: Enforcement Charter (Rated Green)

The Enforcement Charter was updated in 2013.

Response: The requirement to update the Enforcement Charter every 2 years will be achieved.

4.9 Marker 6: Continuous Improvement (Rated Amber)

Planning application processing times and the up to date Enforcement Charters are positives, with all but one action delivered and this is dependent on the approval of the LDP.

Response: The importance of the LDP to the effectiveness of the Planning Service as a whole is recognised and is projected for approval during 2014.

4.10 Marker 7: Local Development Plan (Rated Red)

The Local Plan is now over 7 years old.

Response: In producing the Inverclyde LDP, the Council is obliged to follow proper procedure, and was consequently delayed pending Scottish Government approval of the Strategic Development Plan. The LDP is now with the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, the decisions of which will determine when Inverclyde Council will have an approved LDP.

4.11 Marker 8: Development Plan Scheme (Rated Red)

There is no indication of delay and no mention of project planning, other than the Development Plan Scheme being on track.

Response: The next PPF will provide more detail on proposals and timescales.

4.12 Marker 11: Regular and proportionate policy advice (Rated Red)

There is no evidence that information requests are reasonable and proportionate, or of policy advice.

Response: This will be fully examined and provided in the next PPF.

4.13 Marker 12: Corporate working across services (Rated Green)

There is good evidence of working across council businesses including planning, building standards, economic development, housing and commercial property.

Response: Cross function working will continue in the interests of effective corporate working.

4.14 Marker 13: Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge (Rated Green)

Benchmarking with other authorities takes place, but issues addressed should be reported on.

Response: This will be provided in the next PPF.

4.15 Marker 14: Stalled sites/legacy cases (Rated Amber)

There is an ongoing commitment, but no information provided on success.

Response: There is an ongoing programme of reviewing old cases, with applicants being contacted and cases closed. Further detail will be provided in the next PPF.

4.16 Marker 15: Developer Contributions (Rated Amber)

The LDP proposes a policy on developer contributions, which is clear and reasonable, but there is no evidence of how developer contributions are handled

through the pre application process.

Response: If available, evidence shall be provided in the next PPF.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

5.1 Financial Implications – One off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Year | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

Financial Implications – Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

Legal

5.2 No implications.

Human Resources

5.3 No implications.

Equalities

5.4 No implications.

Repopulation

5.5 No implications.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 None

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Performance Framework Feedback report: Inverclyde Council (December 2013)

Inverclyde Council Planning Performance Framework 2013 (September 2013)