

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Scrutiny & Performance Committee

25 January 2023

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 11 (2021-22)

Report by Head of Planning and Development

(Report No. 23/28)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report relates to the Perth and Kinross Planning Performance Framework 11 (2021-22) (PPF11). A PPF is required to be submitted to the Scottish Government annually. PPF11 (Appendix 1) provides an overview of performance statistics and evidence of continuous improvement for the Planning Service. The PPF was submitted to Government in September 2022 and is published on the Heads of Planning Scotland website: [Planning Performance Framework – HOPS \(hopsotland.org.uk\)](https://hopsotland.org.uk).
- 1.2 Formal feedback on PPF11 was received from Tom Arthur, the Minister for Public Finance, Planning & Community Wealth, on 22 December 2022 (Appendix 2) – a summary of which is set out in paragraphs 4.2 - 4.3 below.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS
2.1 It is recommended that committee:
i) scrutinises the appended Planning Performance Framework;
ii) scrutinises the appended Ministerial feedback received; and
iii) considers and makes suggestions in relation to case studies and service improvements to be included in PPF12.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background/Main Issues
 - Section 5: Key Findings
 - Section 6: Conclusion
 - Appendices

4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 The purpose of the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) is to show how the Council as Planning Authority is working to be a high-quality planning service: how it has performed against nationally agreed key indicators, and what improvement actions will be taken. The PPF therefore looks back on the previous year's performance and forward in terms of future actions.
- 4.2 Ministerial performance feedback received on 22 December 2022 notes the challenges and highlights the importance of an appropriately resourced planning system as key to improving performance. Nationally, the delivery of improvement is to be assisted by the significant increase in planning application fees implemented in April 2022, as well as increased fees for Local Authorities in relation to applications made under the Electricity Act. It also recognises that resourcing requires a pipeline of knowledgeable and skilled planners, as well as money, to delivering the ambitions of NPF4. In this regard, the Future Planners Project led by Heads of Planning Scotland is seen as important in easing the resourcing and skills challenges faced by planning authorities. Beyond this, the Minister also advises that work is progressing on: introducing mandatory training for elected members on the planning system; implementation of statutory annual reports by planning authorities; and the appointment of a Planning Improvement Coordinator for Scotland. Overall, the level of performance is seen as being testament to the hard work and flexibility during challenging times and that good progress is being made.
- 4.3 In terms of the Ministerial performance feedback related to Perth and Kinross, of the 15 performance indicators, rated on a Red/Amber/Green basis, only two are marked Amber, with the remaining thirteen being Green. This significant level of green ratings (87%) against performance markers and none marked as Red recognises the high level of performance within Perth and Kinross's Planning Services. The first Amber relates to planning application decision making timelines, and notes that average decision timescales were slower than the previous year – although remain faster than the Scottish average. The second related to continuous improvement commitments, which had not all been completed – although this reflects that a number are longer term projects than the annual reporting cycle and as such requires a long-term rating trend in feedback. Previously, the PPF was considered by the Planning Policy, Practice and Performance Member Officer Working Group, however this has not sat for some time now and this and future iterations of the PPF will be presented to this Committee. For information PPF10 (2020-21) and previous versions are accessible via the link in para 1.1 and on the PKC website: [Planning Performance Framework - Perth & Kinross Council \(pkc.gov.uk\)](https://www.pkc.gov.uk/planning-performance-framework).

5. KEY FINDINGS

- 5.1 PPF11 reflects on the period between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and focuses on work adapting to new working arrangements, the digital transformation programme, and the new legislative requirements for public engagement. The case studies in Part 1 (pages 5-16) evidence this, providing examples of what has been achieved and the quality of outcomes. This includes ongoing spatial analysis of open space as part of the wider 20-minute neighbourhood approach in the draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4); the work undertaken in terms of active travel; and evidence gathering for Local Place Plans.
- 5.2 Part 2 of the submission provides information on how officers have addressed previously identified service improvements and sets out further improvements as a focus moving forward (pages 17-21). For 2022/23 and beyond, the following have been identified:
- Leadership & Management
 - Customers & Stakeholders
 - Digital
 - Continuous Improvement
- 5.3 Part 3 & 4 of the document focuses on statistical information, evidencing the Council's performance against the National Headline Indicators and Scottish Government Official Statistics (pages 22-29). It highlights progress being made on LDP3 is in line with the Scottish Government timescales, with evidence gathering underway and an engagement strategy being programmed. The PPF indicates that the Development Management function is meeting overall targets, with a significant reduction in legacy cases (planning applications not determined due to information needed from, or actions by, the applicant). This was identified as an area for improvement following feedback last year. The PPF acknowledges that due to the significant turnover in staffing over the past year, with vacancies taking some time to fill, that there has been a minor fall in performance. Part 5 (pages 30-2) provides a snapshot of the staffing situation on 31 March 2022 and Part 6 (pages 33-4) provides information on Committee meetings.
- 5.4 Part 7 (pages 35-42) sets out the performance markers that are used by the Scottish Government to assess how the Council is meeting the required targets. It summarises work being undertaken, makes linkages with the case studies and what improvements have been made in the last year. Finally, performance over the previous six years is captured on page 42.
- 5.5 The Planning Performance Framework is designed to support improvement locally and nationally. The approach is consistent across all local authority areas. However, there may be local improvement actions which the Committee may wish to see delivered. As such the Committee may wish to give consideration to case studies and improvements for PPF 12, along with other, appropriate performance indicators.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Planning Performance Framework has been submitted to update the Committee on the performance of the Planning service for the period from April 2021 to March 2022. It provides members with statistical information and evidence of significant and continuous improvement across almost all aspects.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Planning Performance Framework 2021-22
- Appendix 2 – Ministerial Feedback Letter 22 December 2022

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	No
External	No
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Planning Performance Framework contributes to the following Perth & Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement priorities:

- (ii) *Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens*
- (iii) *Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy*
- (iv) *Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives*
- (v) *Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations*

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Development Plan contributes to the achievement of the following Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (ii) *Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;*
- (iii) *Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;*
- (iv) *Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and*
- (v) *Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.*

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 None.

Workforce

2.2 None.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 None.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 None.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 None.

Sustainability

3.3 None.

Legal and Governance

3.4 None.

Risk

3.5 None.

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 The PPF is a collaborative document with input from throughout the Planning Service.

External

4.2 None.

5. Communication

5.1 None.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 The following background papers were referred to during the preparation of this report:

- Planning Performance Framework 11 (2021-22);
- Ministerial Feedback Letter 22 December 2022.