

Planning Performance Framework

Report by John Blair, Director, Corporate Resources

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to bring to the Committee's attention the attached report by the Head of Planning and Development on Planning Performance Framework.

2 Background

The report was considered by the Planning Committee on 20 November 2012, when the Committee agreed, as follows:-

- (a) To note the new Scottish Government's planning performance arrangements entitled "Planning Performance Framework";
- (b) To note the content of the initial Planning Performance Framework document for Midlothian for the period 2011/12, as submitted to Scottish Ministers in September 2012;
- (c) To seek a further report on the introduction of processing agreements; and
- (d) To refer the report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its interest.

3 Report Implications

These are as outlined in the attached report by the Head of Planning and Development

4 Recommendations

The Committee is invited to consider the attached report by the Head of Planning and Development.

Date 12 December 2012

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Background Papers:



Planning Performance Framework

Report by Head of Planning and Development

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs the Committee of the new performance measures and reporting arrangements which have been put in place by Scottish Government in order to provide a comprehensive and balanced monitor of local planning authorities in Scotland.

2.0 Background

- 2.1** For many years the measurement of planning authority performance across Scotland was essentially limited to the speed of processing of planning applications, and the age of the current local plan(s) for the area. Whilst both these measures are relevant and important they do not convey the full picture in that they are fairly blunt measures needing some further analysis: and they do not cover other notable factors such as the quality of decisions made.
- 2.2** Following work undertaken by the umbrella group of chief and senior planning officers across Scotland (Heads of Planning Scotland) the Minister for Local Government and Planning in March of this year announced that from 1 October 2012 the new Planning Performance Framework (PPF) would become operational. From that date all planning authorities in Scotland have been collecting and recording data on the newly defined measures: with a requirement that a report be submitted annually to Scottish Government.
- 2.3** To provide some basis for initial comparative work, Scottish Government requested that all authorities prepare and submit by the end of September 2012 a PPF for the year 2011/12. A copy of the submitted Midlothian PPF is annexed to this report, and provides a comprehensive statement of the range of matters which are to be included in a PPF.
- 2.4** Scottish Government officials have made clear that the primary purpose of the PPF is to provide Ministers, Councils and the public with a much better understanding of how a particular planning authority is performing. Whilst it is inevitable that comparisons across planning authorities will be made, Scottish Government is advising that it is not a 'name and shame' exercise: where particular authorities may be underperforming then Scottish Government officials through normal liaison with officers in the relevant authorities will seek to assist and support improvement.

- 2.5** Although there is current debate between Scottish Ministers, CoSLA and Councils in the context of national planning reform, particularly on the potential to link performance to the scale of planning application fees charged, there is no indication at present that PPF data will be used in this regard. However, it is important to recognise that the speed with which planning applications are assessed and determined remains a primary performance measure.

3.0 Report Implications

- 3.1 Resource:** there are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

- 3.2 Risk:** inadequate planning performance, particularly in determination times for planning applications could leave the Council vulnerable to sanctions in any reform of the planning fee charging arrangements.

3.3 Policy

Strategy: the roll-out of PPF accords with the Council's overall culture of ensuring comprehensive, relevant and effective performance reporting.

Consultation: none required in the preparation of this report.

Equalities: as no new strategy or policy is being promoted there has been no requirement to assess the equalities implication of the PPF.

Sustainability: no relevant matters arising from this report.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. notes the new Scottish Government's planning performance arrangements entitled "Planning Performance Framework";
- ii. notes the content of the initial Planning Performance Framework document for Midlothian for the period 2011/12, as submitted to Scottish Ministers in September 2012; and
- iii. refers this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its information.

Date 12 November 2012

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Background Papers: Heads of Planning Scotland and Scottish Government information to planning authorities to explain the new PPF preparation and reporting arrangements.