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## **PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Report by Head of Communities and Economy

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### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of work undertaken on the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for Midlothian. Specifically, it provides feedback from Scottish Government on the Council's submitted PPF for 2013/14.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Members may recall an initial report to Committee in November 2012 explaining that from October 2012 the Scottish Government's Minister for Local Government and Planning had instigated a new Planning Performance Framework system under which each local planning authority in Scotland would be required to submit annually a report to Scottish Government on its performance across a range of quantitative and qualitative measures, including the long-standing indicators of age of local plan(s) and speed of handling planning applications. Accordingly, this Council has prepared and submitted PPF reports for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 on which it has received feedback. The 2014/15 PPF report is due to be submitted by 31 July 2015.
- 2.2 As reported to Committee in November 2012 it remains the case that 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 the Scottish Government officials through normal liaison with officers in the relevant authorities will seek to assist and support improvement.
- 2.3 The Council's PPF for 2013/14 was submitted to Scottish Government on 26 September 2014. Given its size copies of the document were circulated to the Groups and a further copy placed in the Members' Library. It provides a comprehensive review of progress during the year and highlights steady improvement in a number of areas, most notably increased performance on the time taken to deal with planning

applications; as well as continued good progress in the preparation of the Midlothian Local Development Plan.

### **3 FEEDBACK ON THE 2013/14 SUBMISSION**

- 3.1 Formal written feedback was received in December 2014 by way of a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights, and enclosing a specific report on a total of fifteen 'performance markers'. A copy of the feedback is attached to this report.
- 3.2 In the feedback report on the fifteen performance matters, five were rated as 'green' giving no cause for concern, eight were rated as 'amber' where areas for improvement are identified, and the following two areas were rated as 'red' where some specific attention is required:-
- i) local development plan – less than 5 years since adoption;  
and
  - iii) development plan scheme – project plan for next local plan.
- 3.3 This compares to four performance matters being rated as green, eight rated as amber and three rated as red in 2012/13.
- 3.4 It may be helpful to advise members of comments on each of these two matters. Concerning the progress on local development plan preparation, in summary the position is that the timetable for preparation of the Midlothian Local Development Plan is dependent upon that of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for South East Scotland. Although Scottish Ministers' approval of the SDP was in June 2013 it was subject to a requirement that the six SESplan Councils jointly prepare supplementary guidance on housing land, and this process was concluded in Summer 2014. This delay impacted on the preparation of the proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP). Notwithstanding this delay the MLDP has been taken to an advanced 'Proposed Plan' stage and will be published for consultation in May 2015. In addition it is important to note that the adopted Midlothian Local Plan (2008) remains as a relevant and robust basis for promoting economic development, meeting housing need, and protecting/enhancing the environment in Midlothian.

### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the feedback from Scottish Government on the Council's submitted Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for 2013/14.

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**Background Paper:** Council's PPF (2013/14) submission