



# PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

2019 - 2020



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## Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council is pleased to present its ninth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report. This PPF focuses on and highlights the work which has been undertaken between April 2019 and March 2020. Towards the end of this reporting period, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a move to a home-working model to maintain delivery of the Planning Service. This report does not address the consequences of that.

Edinburgh is a thriving and dynamic city with a rapidly growing population that continues to maintain its place as one of the most attractive urban centres in Scotland in which to live and work. The city has a continual demand for new housing to meet the needs of both existing and prospective residents, and high quality commercial, retail and leisure development. Meeting these demands while also working to safeguard Edinburgh's unique historical and cultural heritage remains a challenge for the planning department.

The development and growth of the city is managed through the adopted Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) and the associated guidance documents which provide support and additional advice. The Council has recently approved new City Centre Core Supplementary Guidance providing greater policy flexibility to allow a variety of commercial developments in areas of the city formerly defined by retail uses.

The planning service has also continued the process of preparing the new development plan for the city, City Plan 2030. Throughout February and March 2020 eighteen drop in events, awareness raising sessions and consultation hub surgeries were undertaken all across the city, offering members of the public the opportunity to provide valuable input into the development plan process. Over 1,800 representations on the plan were received and extensive publication of the plan process was undertaken on social media.



The planning service remains committed to making improvements based on customer feedback whether it be through complaints, compliments, general feedback, or events such as our annual customer forum.

As in previous years, the service continues to endeavour to improve performance and recognises that the timescales for decision making on applications are a point of concern for stakeholders. The service recognises this a serious concern and has taken steps to address the issue. The distribution of resources has been reviewed to take account of the complex nature of 'local' development applications, recognising that these applications often require a significant amount of officer time and resources to successfully determine. Key figures have improved as a result of these changes. A comprehensive, fee-based pre-application service was introduced in July 2019 which allows customers to discuss proposals directly with officers and identify potential issues with a proposal prior to a formal application being submitted.

A dedicated enforcement team has been re-established to be more effective in monitoring development in the city and in addressing the considerable growth in short term let properties used for visitor accommodation without planning permission.

The service has started to prepare for, and implement, changes to planning processes in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 through direct communication, the introduction of new procedures and guidelines for planning staff and active co-operation with other relevant Council departments. Submissions have also been made to the Scottish Government's consultation on planning fees, with the service aiming to move towards a comprehensive full cost recovery model.

# Part 1 - Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

## Quality of Outcomes

Planning's central aim is to effect the long term sustainable improvement of the city. A key measure of performance lies in how improvements are made to the built and natural environment to facilitate the creation of a sustainable city which remains an attractive place for residents to live, work, play and relax in.

The service continues to strive towards delivering high quality development across the city. In recognition of this, several new developments have received architecture and design recognition. Projects this year that were recognised included the [Edinburgh Printmakers](#) in Fountainbridge, a new mixed use development at [King Stables Road](#), and the [Bayes Centre](#) within the Edinburgh University Campus. Planning played a key role in all these developments and added value at pre-application stage and during the assessment of the proposals.

During the past year, the [Edinburgh Urban Design Panel](#) carried out 20 reviews of emerging development proposals. In addition, the Panel contributed advice to the review of the City Centre Transformation Project, George Street and the West Edinburgh Cycle Route. The panel offered input when proposals were still at an early stage and, in each case, the applicant received a copy of the Panel's report with issues and ideas to consider in order to improve the quality of the submitted application.

The following case studies detail examples of new developments within the city (2019-2020) which show how changes to Edinburgh's built and natural environment have been managed to deliver a better place. The case studies demonstrate how existing local plan policies and non-statutory supporting guidance have been implemented to deliver high quality development and place making.

## Case Study 1: Johnnie Walker Experience

### Overview

The iconic and impressive former House of Fraser Department Store situated at the western end of Princes Street is category B listed, and has longed been considered a key landmark within the heart of the city centre. Significant changes to demand for high street retail amongst the general population led to its closure in 2018. Applications for planning permission and listed building consent were submitted in February 2019 to convert the building into a whisky themed visitor experience.

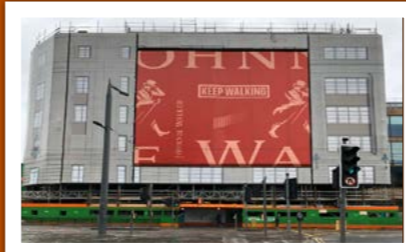
### Goals

The proposed development provided the opportunity to retain a significant commercial presence on Princes Street, and provide a high quality tourist attraction, whilst also safeguarding the historical and architectural character of this iconic listed building. The proposal afforded the service the ability to work collaboratively with the developer on sensitive alterations to the building, and also work towards the aims of the Council's Revised City Centre Retail Core Guidance which allowed greater scope for adaptation of retail units within key city centre areas.

### Outcomes

Planning permission was granted for the proposal in May 2019 with work now well underway on converting the building to its new use. The proposed works included a key conservation gain in the restoration of the original bronze framed shopfront.

Key Performance Marker 3



## Case Study 2: The Granton Waterfront Development Framework

### Overview

The [Granton Waterfront Development Framework](#) outlines the Services aspirations for the sustainable redevelopment of a 50ha site along the coastal edge of the city. Currently consisting of predominantly vacant unmanaged grassland or former industrial sites which are largely inaccessible to the public, the GDWF seeks to provide an overview and structure to the proposed wider scale redevelopment of the area to include housing, commercial, community and public realm infrastructure.

### Goals

The GWDF was developed through active collaboration with a wide variety of both public and private stakeholders including developers, community groups, Architecture and Design Scotland, National Museums Scotland and the Scottish Government. Numerous surgeries and roadshow events were undertaken over 2018-2019, with feedback forming and shaping the approach, response and design of the Development Framework. The intended outcome was the production of a high quality strategic document which could assist in returning this largely underused, inaccessible area of the city into a high quality development with a thriving sustainable community.

### Outcomes

The GWDF was formally adopted by the Planning Committee in February 2020. The framework now forms non-statutory planning guidance and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications which are submitted within the framework area.

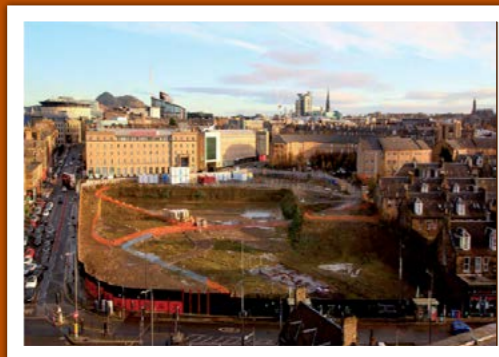
Key Performance Marker - 10



### Case Study 3: Haymarket Redevelopment

#### Overview

This proposed redevelopment of a former car park in the Haymarket area of the city involved the comprehensive redevelopment of the site with a variety of new developments including hotels, offices, retail, leisure, public houses and restaurants. The site had been vacant and cleared for several years.



#### Goals

The proposal provided the opportunity to develop a significant gap site within a key location in the city centre with a well-designed, high quality, sustainable development. The proposal was subject to a processing agreement, and pre-application elected member and professional input from the Edinburgh Design Panel in order to help develop a scheme which was able to suitably respect the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Site and the historic environment, whilst also establishing a development with a sense of place on a site that was failing to contribute to the central heart of Haymarket.

#### Outcomes

The proposal was granted consent in December 2019 with work on the development set to commence in 2020.

Key Performance Markers 2, 3, 14

### Quality of Service and Engagement

The service continues to focus on customer engagement and improvements. Throughout the year customer feedback was received by various means including the Edinburgh Civic Forum, Community Council Briefings, the Access Panel, the Edinburgh Development Forum and various consultations. Actions suggested by attendees at a Customer Forum event in September 2019 have been incorporated into the ongoing Planning Improvement Plan, particularly focusing on communication, consistency of decision making and time performance.

The Improvement Plan has brought forward a number of actions which are beginning to have an impact on performance statistics and the overall quality of our service.

The Council's new pre-application advice service has been adopted and is being monitored, with 160 cases handled so far. Further study of cases brought forward as applications will need to be considered, as well as consideration of feedback, to ensure this new service leads to positive outcomes for the Council and our customers.



Our engagement strategy has been far reaching, particularly around the preparation of the Choices for City Plan and draft City Mobility Plan consultation documents, which have had an extensive level of publicity and engagement. Our service continues to use social media to share service updates, news and consultation information. We have started to use twitter to share and raise awareness of Planning Committee decisions and our blog is used by many customers as a source of information on our service.

Our case studies here show ways which we have been striving to improve our ways of working in order to provide a better service for customers, either through our work to produce a Choices for City Plan document with a high level of engagement, embed biodiversity into our policies and plans, or change the way we do enforcement for a more efficient service.

### Case Study 4: Western Harbour enforcement case

#### Overview

Western Harbour was of particular interest as a short stay letting agent had based itself in one of the buildings and was actively marketing its services. As a result, it was acting as the agent for a large proportion of the short stay let properties in the area. The issues identified were causing significant disruption to residents, impacting on their amenity and causing anti-social behaviour which had necessitated police action on occasion. Individual units were being investigated on a case by case basis and as part of that process, it became evident that there was a wider problem affecting a number of different blocks within the developments.

Through dialogue with the local Residents Association, it was apparent that the short stay lets were operating as a large scale commercial business with approximately 40 short stay lets. The cleaning regime was akin to a hotel with cleaning carts being used in the corridors and lifts, a commercial laundry company being used and one of the flats being used as a linen store. This intensive use of the properties was causing issues with wear and tear as well as disruption, amenity and security problems.

#### Goals

Council officers worked with the Residents Association and Factors to look at ways of tackling the issues in a more comprehensive manner. In this instance, it was identified that properties in this block were not be permitted to be used as short stay lets, as per their title deeds. The Factors and Residents Association took collective action to enforce the deeds and wrote to the properties with regards to the requirements of the deeds. This was then followed up by a strongly worded letter from the Council outlining the planning position with regards to the change of use to short stay let, the potential planning enforcement action, the health and safety responsibilities and also the potential commercial waste requirements as a majority of the properties were paying business rates.

#### Outcomes:

This particular case gives an indication of the exceptional circumstances which were required to achieve a successful outcome (i.e. clear title deeds, factoring and strong community support) along with emphasising the significant amount of Council resource required over a prolonged period of time.

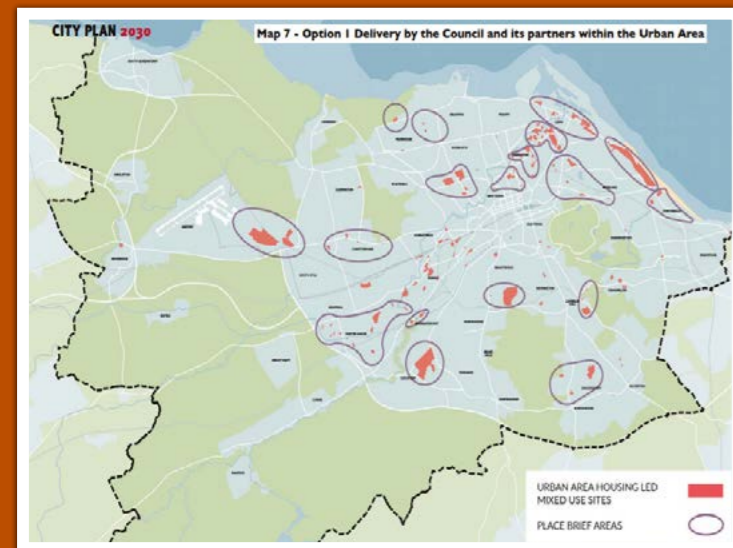
Key Performance Markers: 12



## Case Study 5: Choices for City Plan 2030

### Overview

The preparation of the Local Development Plan is a statutory requirement, and the main issues report has been prepared as the main consultation document to inform the proposed plan, based on extensive research, early consultation and discussion with stakeholders. The main issues report is called Choices for City Plan, in recognition of the important policy decisions to be made which are highlighted in the document.



### Goals

City Plan 2030 is being prepared in a much more collaborative way than the 2016 LDP with greater elected member oversight. Input for Choices has come from elected members workshops, events held in local communities around the city involving community councils and others, key stakeholders' workshops as well as research undertaken by different teams within the council and a commercial needs study commissioned to inform City Plan as well as other council strategies.

### Outcomes

Choices has now been approved by the planning committee with consultations now underway. Consultations are being held alongside the City Mobility Plan, aligning the future of transport and land use planning in people's minds. Choices has had a large amount of interest so far and has been designed to take into account a number of ongoing strategies within the council, including the mobility plan, City Centre Transformation and the Council's affordable homes target.

Key Performance markers, 8,9,10



## Case Study 6: Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan

### Overview:

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2021 (EBAP) continues the successful partnership approach to biodiversity conservation across the City and surrounding countryside. This fifth edition builds on the trend of an action plan that is ambitious yet pragmatic, focused and deliverable. The strong elements of partnership working and community involvement remain key components, with new individuals and organisations joining us.

### Goals:

The EBAP is embedded in delivering high quality places for people and nature. Strong links to Edinburgh Design Guidance, Open Space Strategy, Active Travel and Climate Adaptation are evident throughout the Plan.

### Outcomes:

The EBAP demonstrates the interest and challenges for nature conservation as well as the willingness of stakeholders to work together to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

There are ongoing opportunities to use social media to engage further with residents and visitors. New projects, focusing on private gardens, pollinators and coastal habitat enhancement are underway.

Key Performance Markers: 3 and 13



## Governance

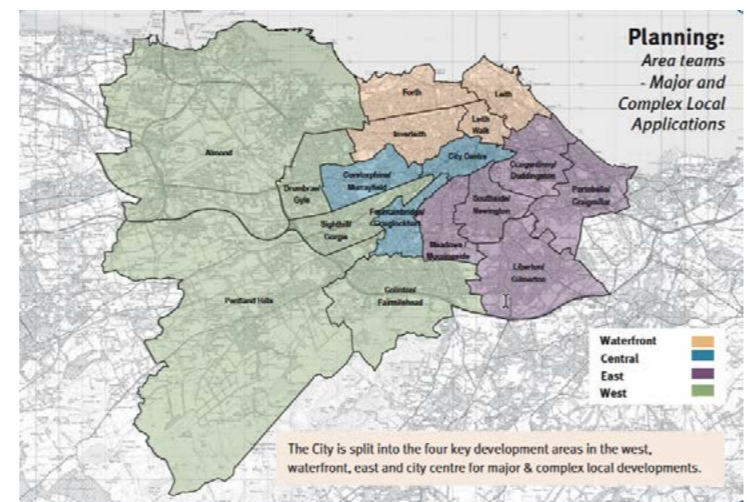
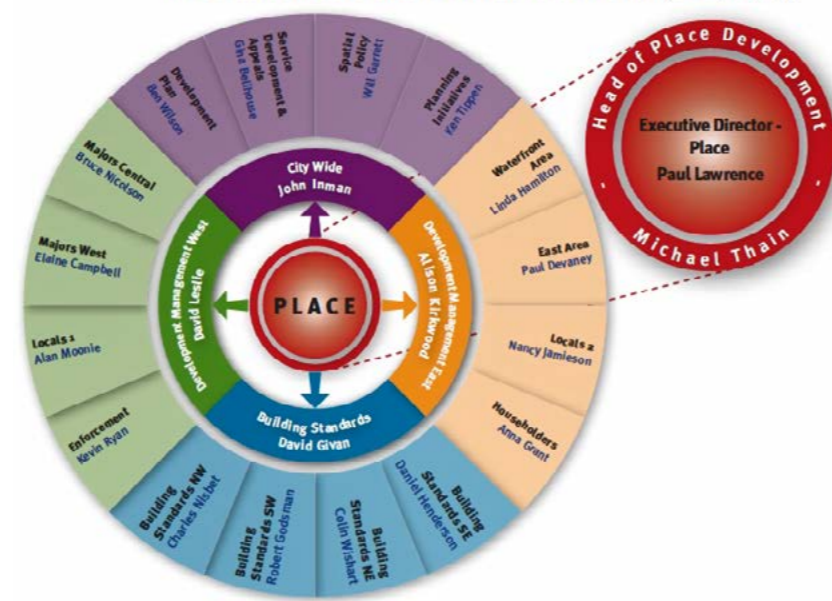
Within the Council structure, the planning and building standards service sits within the Place Directorate alongside other Council functions responsible for development and quality of the city including transport, waste, culture, parks and greenspace. At a political level, planning related matters are reported to several main Council Committees – Planning, Development Management Sub-Committee, Housing and Economy and Transport and Environment. Reporting to multiple committees provides a key opportunity for close collaboration on important projects and the ability for continued joint working by officers within multiple departments and Councillors.

The Planning Service has seen notable change in its governance structure and working practices over the period in order to continue to provide an effective and efficient service in a challenging environment. Several case studies have been included to highlight the progress which has been made to improve governance across the service

Two case studies focus specifically on changes which have been undertaken to the internal structure of the planning authority. The first case study outlines how the service has introduced a formal paid pre application service, a project which has undergone extensive consultation and development and which is proving extremely important in both generating vital revenue to reinvest in services, and improve the quality of the application process for both applicant and officer. The second case study highlights the work done to introduce a standard legal template and reduce delays and inconsistencies in the formulation of important legal agreements which are crucial to delivering public infrastructure.

A further case study highlights the collaborative approach which has been made towards the preparation of the Edinburgh City Mobility Plan, an ambitious long term programme which aims to reduce congestion and traffic related pollution, increase walking and cycling and improve city streets and public spaces.

PLANNING & BUILDING STANDARDS STRUCTURE (at 01/06/19)



## Case Study 7 - Edinburgh City Mobility Plan

### Overview

Edinburgh is continually striving to improve its public transport provision and create an environment which is both safe and effective to allow the movement of people and goods around the city. The city has set itself an ambitious target of becoming net carbon zero by 2030, and, with transport being the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emission, new approaches and practices are required to ensure that transport policy in the city is able to meet this aim.

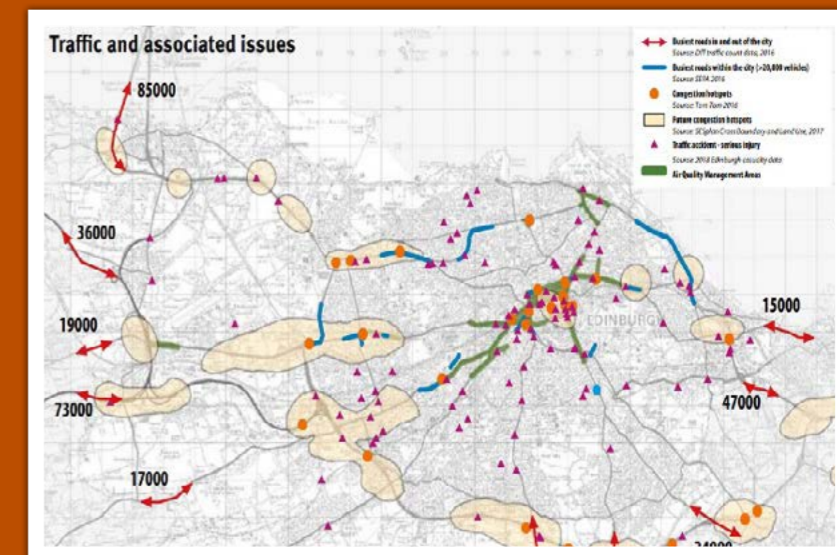
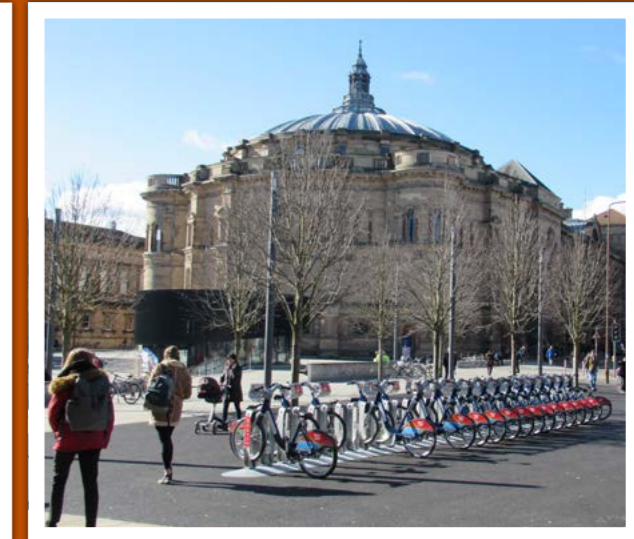
### Goals

The City Mobility Plan aims to provide a strategic framework for the safe and effective movement of people and goods around Edinburgh up to 2030, focusing on mobility's role in maintaining Edinburgh as a vibrant, attractive city while addressing the environmental and health impacts. The plan forms part of a number of strategies which are coordinated through a single multi-disciplinary team working within the Planning Service, and which also involve input from other Council Departments and Sustrans.

### Outcomes

During Spring and Summer 2019 extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken with over 100 specialist stakeholders including the transport forum, individual transport consultants, Transport Scotland, and the officer responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of Nottingham City Council's Workplace Parking Levy, the only such levy of its type in the UK. Taken together with earlier public consultation, the views of stakeholders contributed to the final draft strategy which was published in January 2020, with the aim of the completed strategy being reported to the Council's Transport and Environment Committee by autumn 2020.

Key Performance Markers, 9 and 12



## Case Study 8 - Paid for Pre-Application Advice Service

### Overview

Providing high quality recorded pre-application advice is an extremely important aspect of the planning process. The opportunity for both representatives of the planning service and applicants to meet directly is vital in ensuring that applications are of a suitable standard, and that any delays in processing such applications are minimised.

Following on from consultation surveys and stakeholder events undertaken in early 2019, the service was formally introduced in July 2019. Prospective applicants were offered three tiers of service, local development (small), local development (medium) and major/national development; with each tier providing a level of service commensurate with the application. Proposals for small and medium local developments were offered case officer reviews, site meetings and also consultee input. Proposals for major developments were offered multiple meetings, with the presence of team managers, internal and external consultees.

### Goals

The paid for pre-application service moves the Planning Service towards a key Council target to make the service self-financing. The service also aims to ultimately improve the quality of submissions and identify key considerations and potential issues before a full application is submitted, ultimately assisting in minimising the extent of any delays during the period of submission to determination.

### Outcomes

Between the establishment of the service in July 2019 and the end of the PPF period in April 2020, a total of 160 formal pre-application enquiries were received through the new service.

The service generated a total of £194,550 prior to its suspension in early March 2020 due to the Covid-19 Coronavirus outbreak. Limited qualitative feedback has been generated from online surveys suggesting that the service has potential benefits, such as creating a better relationship between planners and developers; and also outlining areas for improvement such as a requirement for making pre-application notes public and a need to ensure a consistent quality of advice for all schemes.

Key Performance Markers 10 and 12

The image shows a screenshot of a web form titled "Planning Pre-Application Advice Service: Request Form" from the City of Edinburgh Council. The form is divided into two main sections: "1) Contact details" and "2) Development proposal".

**1) Contact details**

Applicant		Agent (if applicable)	
Name:	<input type="text"/>	Name:	<input type="text"/>
Organisation:	<input type="text"/>	Organisation:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>	Address:	<input type="text"/>
Phone:	<input type="text"/>	Phone:	<input type="text"/>
Email:	<input type="text"/>	Email:	<input type="text"/>

**2) Development proposal**

Please provide the address/location of the proposed development.

Please specify the existing land use, any existing floor areas, and known environmental constraints.

## Case Study 9 - Legal Agreement Template

### Overview

Ensuring that all the relevant information is in place to allow solicitors acting on behalf of the local authority to formulate effective legal agreements which can withstand the necessary scrutiny is essential in order to secure the required financial contributions to deliver key infrastructure. In order to assist with this aim, the Council's Legal Services Department, working in conjunction with the planning service, has introduced a standard template to be completed by all officers determining an application which involves a legal contribution.

### Goals

Prior to the implementation of the standard template, the manner in which case officers presented the information required for a legal agreement was subject to individual approach and did not have a standard format. This sometimes resulted in the individuals formulating the agreement having to review entire reports in order to identify what information should be included in an obligation, creating a drain on local authority resources.

### Outcomes

Two distinctive templates have been created, one for post committee and delegated decisions where an application has been approved with 'Minded to Grant' status, (in such circumstances the formal decision notice will be issued once a legal agreement has been concluded); and one for pre determination cases where there is a written undertaking from a developer to meet the Council's reasonable costs where an application was refused planning permission.

Whilst the template is still relatively new, the planning service has noted a reduction in requests from solicitors asking for additional information or clarity on issues, and that more obligations are ultimately being concluded within the six month timescale from the date of the initial decision which the Council aims to conclude all agreement.

Key Performance Markers 4 and 12.





## Case Study 10 - Planning Improvement Plan Governance Refresh

### Overview

In Autumn 2019 the planning service undertook a refresh of its existing planning improvement plan (PIP) in order to address national performance indicators. The existing PIP was approved by Planning Committee in 2018 and outlined in detail how the service aimed to achieve its overarching vision to be a great organisation to work for and with while making a better Edinburgh and providing excellent service.

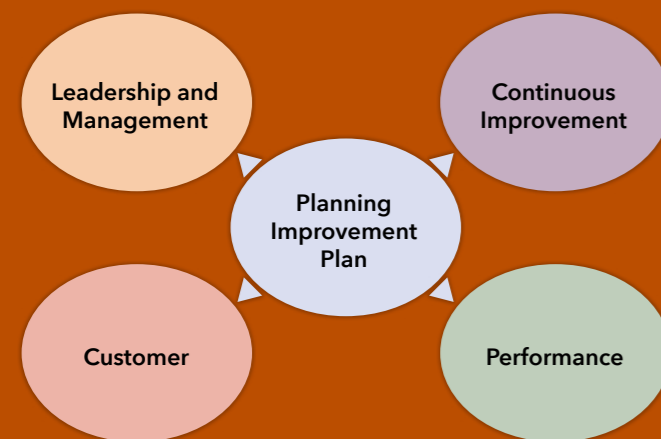
### Goals

The refresh primarily aimed to revisit the governance arrangements of the PIP in order to ensure that that the plan is better supported, clearly setting out the level of corporate support and co-ordination required to make sure the PIP can be delivered in full. A key development was the merging of the PIP board with the existing building standards improvement plan board, providing the aims of the PIP with a broad level of support at corporate level while also recognising the important link between planning and building standards in delivering a high quality built environment.

### Outcomes

The PIP, together with its building standards counterpart, has now joined the Council's portfolio of major projects which report directly to the Corporate Change Board. Reporting to this level provides high level oversight and support for the aims of the PIP, and recognises the increasing importance being shown to both the improvements which have been implemented in the services, and the priority which both services have in improving the quality of the city as a whole.

### Key Performance Marker: 12



## Culture of Continuous Improvement

Over the past year, the service has continued to provide extensive training for our staff and councillors, and this was recognised by the RTPI with a Learning Partner Award. By providing training for officers, elected members and community councils the Planning Policy network encompasses the whole community. The initiative not only provides CPD for planners in Edinburgh, but also jointly with neighbouring authorities and colleagues from related disciplines. They also delivered training to elected members including a mock public enquiry and ran interactive workshops with community councillors. These sessions have had an impact on elected members' understanding of the role planners play and have improved community councillors' understanding and perceptions of the planning system.

As part of the peer review process for the 2018/19 PPF, staff members visited our review partners in West Dunbartonshire Council. Members of both authorities were able to share experiences relating to composing the respective PPF documents, and also discuss the various challenges and opportunities in delivering sustainable development in differing local authority areas.

The council continues to undertake effective monitoring and updating of non-statutory guidance to take account of fast moving changes in society which affect the nature of development in the built environment. One of the case studies in this section focuses specifically on the changes to our city centre supplementary guidance to allow more flexibility in changing retail units in response to reducing consumer demand.

The service has also built on the existing internal training and development for staff members by developing the 'delivering excellence' programme which is detailed in this section. The programme seeks to maximise efficiency throughout the process for the benefit of both internal and external stakeholders.

As a service, we also continue to strive to improve services based on customer feedback through surveys, compliments, complaints and the annual customer forum.



## Case Study 11 - City Centre Retail Supplementary Guidance

### Overview:

An update of our City Centre Retail Supplementary Guidance was prepared and adopted in March 2020. The guidance is a statutory requirement of our Local Development Plan policy on shops to guide how and where shops and non-shop uses in town centres, including the city centre, are permitted. It sets out the circumstances where a planning application for a change of use from a shop to a non-shop use will be supported.

### Goals:

Since the original guidance was adopted there have been changes in circumstances that are likely to have an impact on the city centre such as; wider changes to shopping trends, the publication of our City Centre Transformation strategy, the future opening of the new Edinburgh St James and many changes of use in the centre. The new guidance was required to adapt to this new environment. It was also backed by a recently commissioned retail and leisure study into wider economic trends in this sector.

### Outcomes:

The new guidance has been prepared with the input of relevant stakeholders who were invited to a stakeholder workshop on the guidance. It was also opened to wider consultation.

The guidance allows more flexibility in changes of use in the city centre to reflect changing economic and physical conditions and ensure the city centre is prepared to move forward in the coming years.

Key Performance Markers: 10 and 11



## Case Study 12 - Training for Staff, Councillors and Community Councils

### Overview

The planning service has continued its established practice of providing a detailed and varied learning and development programme for staff, elected members and Community Councils. Teams within the department have undertaken development days outside the office, focusing on different development activities which focus on the individual team learning requirements. Regular lunchtime seminars are held for all department staff to ensure that professional knowledge and experience are shared as widely as possible. Members of other service areas have also been invited to attend individual team meetings to give input and provide an overview as to how developments can better handle wider organisational concerns.

Within the service, an APC licentiate process group has been established with all mentors and licentiates meeting on a regular basis to enable an exchange of ideas and advice for those seeking to become chartered members.

As part of the Planning Performance Framework peer review process, members of the service met directly with West Dunbartonshire Council to share professional experience and provide feedback and analysis on each respective PPF.

The annual Planning Committee tour continues to form an important part of the training programme, with Committee members visiting completed developments throughout the city and undertaking conversations with developers, community council representatives and members of the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel.

### Goals

With increasing numbers of senior service staff retiring or reaching retirement age, the Council recognises the importance of ensuring that less experienced members of staff are given every opportunity to expand their own knowledge in order to improve overall service performance and consistency of delivery. Training provided for elected members and community council representatives remains important in increasing their understanding of the planning system and overall participation in the process.

### Outcomes

Service staff attended a variety of RTPI conferences including the RTPI Scotland and Scottish Young Planners Conference, Scottish Planning and Environmental Law Conference and the Scottish Planning Enforcement Forum. Feedback sessions were held to allow attendees to share their experience with colleagues. Lunchtime seminars were held on a variety of topics including street naming, short term lets, legal agreements and committee procedure.

Where there are changes to membership of Planning Committee, elected members joining committee are given focused training to refresh their previous briefings and address committee-specific issues. That was delivered for individual members during the past year. Planning Committee members collectively participated in training workshops covering topics of development viability, design outcomes, committee decision-making and code of conduct issues. Members reviewed completed developments in the Burdiehouse, Gilmerton and Fountainbridge areas on their annual committee tour.

We delivered a training workshop for community councils which addressed effective engagement in development plan preparation stages and in commenting on development proposals.

The PPF review with West Dunbartonshire Council outlined how both councils face continuous challenges in respect of ensuring a high standard of design and layout while delivering an appropriate density of residential development in suitable locations. The work undertaken in Dumbaron to redevelop the waterfront with new residential and commercial development provided an excellent example of how to successfully utilise brownfield sites to meet current demand.

Key performance markers - 6 and 13

## Case Study 13 Planning Enforcement Charter

### Overview

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 places a requirement for Councils to produce an enforcement charter as a means of raising the profile of planning enforcement and to update it every two years.

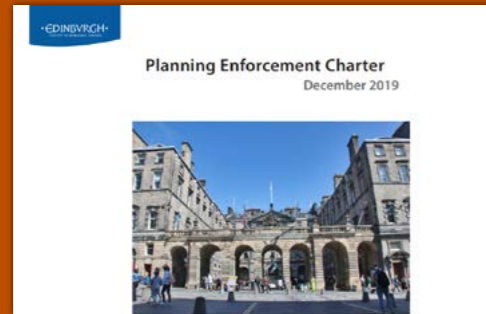
### Goals

The charter aims to clearly set both the Council's legislative duty in respect of the enforcement of unauthorised development in the city, and the service standards which individuals raising enquiries can expect. The charter also aim to set out the individual standards which apply in cases relating to the investigation of more complicated short stay commercial leisure accommodation.

### Outcomes

The charter was published in December 2019 out. The charter also included photographic evidence of cases where the involvement of the enforcement section had resulted in notable improvement to the built environment and the upholding of local planning policy.

Key Performance Markers 5 and 11



## Case Study 14 - Delivering Excellence

### Overview

Ensuring that the planning service is able to operate with maximum efficiency in undertaking its responsibilities is extremely important having regards to both the constrained financial climate which many local authorities operate, and the need to ensure that resources are allocated in a manner which allows the service to discharge its functions to a satisfactory standard while continuing to strive to meet statutory timescales.

During 2019-2020, the service has undertaken the 'Delivering Excellence' programme. This has involved selected members of all parts of the service, including technicians and administration staff, mapping out each part of their respective processes from start to finish using the 'Engage' Project Management Software.

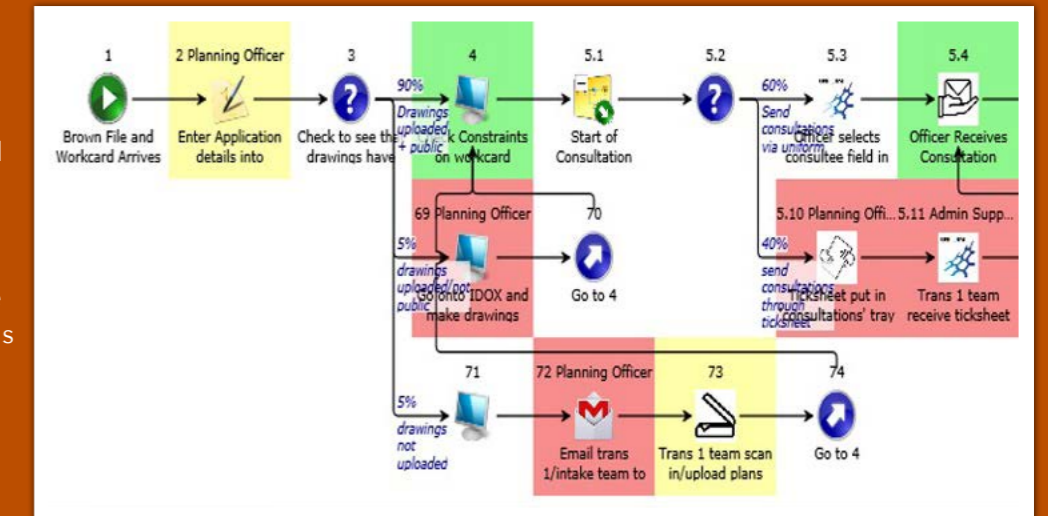
### Goals

The ultimate goal of the 'Delivering Excellence' programme is the creation of a comprehensive identification and registration of each aspect of the planning application and enforcement process, from first payment through to the issuing of a decision notice. This will allow the service to identify which parts of the process are vital, and which parts are inefficient and could be reformed or eliminated altogether to provide a more cost and resource efficient service for the benefit of all stakeholders.

### Outcomes

Multiple processes have been mapped including registration, payment process, the application process and enforcement investigations. The only process which remains to be mapped is reporting to committee. All staff members within the department have been briefed and the project is ready to be advanced to the next stage for detailed analysis and review of existing procedures.

Key Performance Markers: 12



## Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

The service has drawn on a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative sources in the preparation of this report. This has included the annual customer forum, working collaboratively with other Council services and partner agencies, community council and councillor training, and benchmarking through Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS). Sources used to compile this report include:

- Planning Committee reports
- Planning Committee training
- The Scottish Government Review of the Planning Process
- The Scottish Government planning fee consultation process
- The Scottish Government – Local Government and Communities Committee
- SESPlan
- The Adopted Edinburgh Local Development Plan
- Development Plan Schemes
- Non-Statutory Council Planning Guidelines
- Edinburgh Design Guidance
- Planning Enforcement Charter
- The Edinburgh Planning Blog
- Committee webcasts
- Planning and Building Standards Customer Care Charter
- Edinburgh Urban Design Panel
- Edinburgh City Mobility Plan
- City Plan 2030 Public Consultation Events
- EAA Awards
- RIAS Awards
- SAQP Awards
- Landscape Institute Awards
- Planning Service Improvement Plans
- Processing agreements guidance and templates

## Part 3 – Service Improvements

The table below summarises progress on the Planning Improvement Plan 2018/2021

Improvement Themes	Actions
Leadership and Management	<p>We have successfully recruited to the following additional posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 x Senior Planning Officers (Enforcement)</li> <li>• 1 x Senior Planning Officer (Design)</li> <li>• 1 x Senior Planning Officer (Local)</li> <li>• 1 x Senior Planning Officer (Major)</li> <li>• 4 x Assistant Planning Officers</li> <li>• 1 x Senior Administrator (Customer)</li> </ul> <p>We have moved quickly to fill permanent, secondment and maternity vacancies to minimise impact on performance.</p> <p>To strengthen leadership for the preparation of City Plan and its relationship with city region planning and the City Mobility Plan, a Programme Director was seconded in from another local authority to work alongside service managers.</p> <p>Realignment of staff resources and teams has been trialled. This has been combined with an ongoing assessment of workload to respond to pressures in a more flexible and agile way. The contribution of this to an improvement in time performance figures has been evaluated.</p> <p>A staff survey and a stress risk assessment have been undertaken to better understand the views and needs of Planning staff. These are being used to inform change and improvement in the service.</p>
Customer Improvements	<p>The third annual Planning and Building Standards Customer Forum event took place in September 2019 and was well received. Themes raised include communication, consistency of decision making and time performance.</p> <p>Feedback indicated that changes to working practices were beginning to have positive impacts, but more needs to be done for major applications and key stages in the process, such as consultee input. It also indicated that other aspects of performance, such as quality of outcome, need to be addressed.</p> <p>We have continued to use the Planning Edinburgh blog to update customers on City Plan 2030, let people know about consultation events and procedural changes and share research and technical information.</p>

Improvement Themes	Actions
Performance and Continuous Improvement	<p>The following arrangements were introduced to speed up decision making timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-alignment of staff resources across the service to improve the efficiency and quality of decisions;</li> <li>• detailed weekly monitoring reports by team of applications received, being assessed and determined;</li> <li>• better use of the “stop the clock” protocol to provide more accurate measurement of the planning authority's own performance; and</li> <li>• ongoing review of processes with regular staff training sessions.</li> </ul> <p>The impact of these was discussed at the Customer Forum in September 2019.</p> <p>A new electronic sign-off process for applications has been adopted, saving paper in the office and allowing for better and more efficient remote working.</p> <p>Weekly meetings have been held with the Council's internal Digital Services team and external partner CGI to resolve ongoing issues and identify development opportunities as part of improvement programme.</p> <p>A major hardware refresh was rolled out in October. A number of Microsoft Surface Pro machines, with detachable tablets for use on site visits, have been allocated to teams where this will have greatest impact. New laptops have been issued to other staff, including a small number of machines suited for specialist Geographical Information System (GIS) activities.</p> <p>A new template for identifying developer contribution requirements in a consistent and efficient way has been developed and trialled. Training for all relevant staff on the end-to-end developer contributions process has been delivered – a recommendation of an Internal Audit on contributions.</p>

The table below sets out the improvement priorities for the year ahead as set out in the Planning Improvement Plan (2018-2021)

Improvement Themes	Actions
Leadership and Management	<p>New approaches to resource and workload alignment will continue to be explored and tested for effectiveness.</p> <p>The team managers' role will be developed to ensure that the needs of both the service and our customers are being delivered. This will include support from Human Resources (HR) colleagues as part of the new Leadership Framework and using external management expertise.</p> <p>Team members will continue to expand their roles to include greater strategic involvement in service and performance improvements.</p>
Customer Improvements	<p>Early findings and next steps for the revised pre-application advice service are the subject of a dedicated evaluation reported separately.</p> <p>Protocols for handling customer enquiries by email and telephone have been developed and will be trialled before full roll out.</p> <p>The Planning change and improvement programme will be closely coordinated with changes in other Council services to ensure that opportunities for improvement to customer service are explored and learning is shared.</p>
Performance and Continuous Improvement	<p>Time performance monitoring will continue to be developed, with a particular focus on accurate capture of use of measures such as stop-the-clock and extensions to application determination timescales. These improvements will also provide more rapid feedback to teams, as has been developed for Building Standards.</p> <p>The other recommendations from the Internal Audit report on the developer contributions process will be implemented by Planning, Finance and Legal Services.</p> <p>Lessons learnt from the internal review process and the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel will continue to be shared with case officers and changes introduced to strengthen the approach to raising design quality. Approaches taken to measuring quality of outcome will be investigated.</p> <p>Lessons from the Building Standards improvement programme will be applied to change and improvement in Planning.</p>

## Part 4 - National Headline Indicators

### National Headline Indicators

#### A: NHI Key Outcomes - Development Planning:

Development Planning	2019/2020	2018/2019
<b>Local and Strategic Development Planning</b>		
Age of local/ strategic development plans(s) at end of reporting period	3 yrs 4 mths	2 yrs 4 mths
Will the local/strategic development plan be replaced by their 5 year targets	No	No
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in development plan scheme changed over the past year	Yes	Yes
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year	Yes	Yes

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs	2019/2020	2018/2019
Established Housing Land Supply	29,063	30,164
5-year effective housing land supply programming	NA	13,748
5-year effective land supply	20,945	22,696
5-year housing supply target	9,628	10,526
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal Place)	NA	6.5
Housing Approvals*	2,661	2,523
Housing Completions over the last 5 years	12,058	11,243
Marketable employment land supply**	260.4	284.6
Employment land take-up during reporting year	7.3***	3.4

\* The housing approval figures only include FUL and PPP applications (not AMC) to avoid double counting The 2017/18 figure has been adjusted to the same basis

\*\* The figure for 2017/18 has been amended to reflect more accurate digitisation

\*\*\* Some of the change in this figure is due to refining site area

#### B: NHI Key Outcomes - Development Management

Development Management:	2019-20	2018-19
<b>Project Planning</b>		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre application advice	4.18% (168)	20.9% (769)
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	30%	60%
<b>Decision Making</b>		
Application approval rate	91%	89.6%
Delegation rate	95.7%	94.7%
Validation	68.3%	66.4%
<b>Decision-Making Timescales</b>		
Major Developments	45.7 weeks	86.3 weeks
Local Developments (non-householder)	15.6 weeks	18 weeks
Householder Developments	8.1 weeks	8.5 weeks
<b>Legacy Cases</b>		
Number cleared during reporting period	36	85
Number remaining	71	60

#### C: Enforcement Activity

Enforcement	2019-20	2018-19
Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed	3 months	15 months
Requirement: review every 2 years		
Complaints lodged and investigated	908	708
Breaches identified - no further action taken	475	243
Cases closed	931	691
Notices served	75	73
Direct Action	1	3
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

## Part 5 Scottish Government Official Statistics

### D: NHI Key Outcomes - Commentary

Work continues with the preparation of Cityplan 2030 which will form the next Local Development Plan. The progress of the plan has however been delayed by both the rejection of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan (SESPan 2) and the restrictions placed on individual staff as a result of the lockdown measures imposed during the Covid 19 coronavirus emergency. Consequently, the LDP will not be adopted within the five-year target.

An additional consequence of the coronavirus emergency is that it has not proved possible for the service to ascertain completed housing land supply figures by the time of the publication of this document. The service ordinarily undertakes its annual housing land audit and completions programme in April each year. However, the restrictions imposed as a result of coronavirus ultimately left staff members unable to complete a full review and determine the 5 year housing land supply programme.

Validation levels have shown a small scale improvement which is reflective of the both the feedback offered via the customer forum, and increased availability of online guidance and advice providing assistance with the submission of an application.

A combination of internal restructuring to deal with higher volumes of applications and staff training and development have led to a small scale improvement in the timescale for determining both householder and non-householder local developments. Improvements have also been made in respect of the determination period for major developments. However, such determination periods continue to remain susceptible to a requirement to conclude legal agreements before consent is issued.

There was a rise in the number of enforcement cases both taken up and closed. This is primarily reflective of the notable increase in the number of investigations relating to Short Stay Commercial Leisure Accommodation (SSCLA), and the significant effort and resources which the service is devoting to dealing comprehensively with this very important issue.

The introduction of a formal paid for pre-application service in July 2019 has seen a reduction in the overall number of applications which received pre application advice over the PPF period.

### A: Decision making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Timescales	2019-20	2019-2020	2018-2019
Overall	Numbers/Percentages	Weeks	Weeks
<b>Major Developments</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>61.1</b>
Local Developments (nonhouseholder)	691	15.6	16.8
• Local: less than 2 months	47%	7.1	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	53%	12.8	24.2
Householder Developments	1542	8.1	8.5
• Local: less than 2 months	82.6%	7.1	7.2
• Local : more than 2 months	17.4%	12.8	13.0
<b>Housing Developments</b>			
Major	6	46	78.0
Local Housing Developments	172		
• Local: less than 2 months	37.2%	7.5	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	62.8%	25.4	30.1
Business and Industry			
Major	1	43.7	88.8
Local business and industry developments	33		
• Local: less than 2 months	63.6%	6.7	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	36.4%	21.4	17.0
<b>EIA Developments</b>	<b>0</b>		
Other consents			
• As listed in the guidance (right)	1401	9.0	10.2
<b>Planning/legal agreements</b>			
• Major: average time	11	59.8	84.6
• Local: average time	28	51.4	68.5

## B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Original decision upheld						
	Total number of decisions	Original Decision Upheld	2018-19		2017-2018	
			No	Dec upheld	No	Dec upheld
Local Reviews	74	71.6%	94	69.1%	46	79.3
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	55	60.0%	84	57.2%	34	68.0

## C: Context

The service has continued to build upon the work of the Planning Improvement Plan approved in 2018 in using different indicators to measure performance such as processing agreements and extensions of time, in addition to the data provided by the Scottish Government. In 2020, the service also began to introduce the 'stop the clock' mechanism for more complex local developments where it is often identified during the application process that more information is required to enable the assessing officer to decide the application. The increasing utilisation of this mechanism should lead to an improvement over time in decision making timescales for local developments.

Overall there has been a small improvement in the determination time for non-householder developments which reflects the changes in the internal structure to allow more complex local applications to be spread across more teams. Decision making timescales for householder developments have also marginally improved, and the service continues to look into appropriate means to improve these timescales.

The information provided regarding major development applications relates to the 20 out of 30 applications which were not subject to processing agreements. The clearance of several legacy case applications enabled the overall timescale for determination of these applications to reduce notably.

There has been a marked reduction in appeals to both the Scottish Ministers and the Local Review Body in comparison to the 2018-2019 PPF year. The majority of officer decisions continue to be upheld by both appeal bodies. The reason for the notable reduction in appeals being submitted is unclear. However, the time taken to handle these appeals continues to have an impact on internal resources and decision making timescales.

## Part 6 Workforce Information

In 2019/2020 the planning service moved to a new service model which involved the two local development application teams, the enforcement team, and the householder team moving to a city wide coverage area, replacing the old east/west team areas. This has also seen the re-establishment of a dedicated enforcement team focusing solely on the investigation of enforcement enquiries. Four area teams dealing primarily with major developments and larger local developments have been established to cover the east, west, central and waterfront areas of the city. Local plan and policy related activities are all undertaken on a city wide basis. Administration and business support staff are provided from a central council resource and are not included in the information below. Specialist roles include transport officers, biodiversity staff, tree and landscape officers, legal agreement officers and street naming staff. The majority of staff within the service are either members or eligible to be members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

	Tier Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service				X

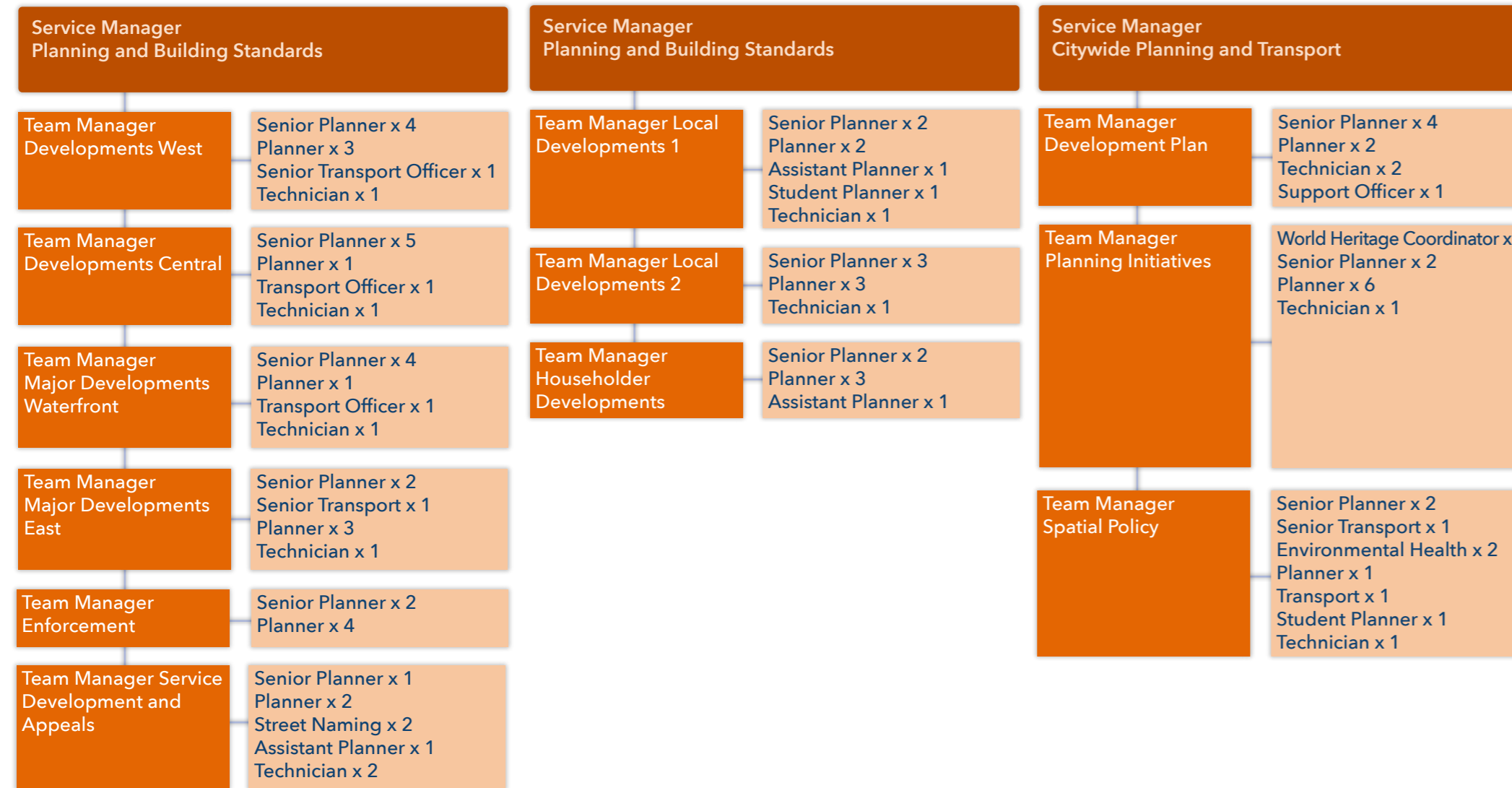
Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	7
30-39	28
40-49	29
50 and over	44

RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount
Chartered Members	57
Associate RTPI members	1
Legal associate RTPI members	0
Licentiate RTPI members	10
Other planners	3
Total	71



## Part 7 – Planning Committee Information

Planning Service Structure (at 31st March 2020)



\*Establishment posts - not all filled at 31 March 2020

The table below sets out the Committees for the past 2018/19 year.

Committee and Site Visits	Number Per Year
Full Council Meetings	12
Planning Committees Development Management Sub Committee	4 and 21
Area Committees	Not Applicable
Committee Site Visits	6
Local Review Body Meetings	14
LRB Site Visits	3

## Appendix 1 – Performance Markers

Performance Marker	Part of PPF report demonstrating evidence for this marker
<b>Driving Improved Performance</b>	
1	Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types Part 4 – National Headline Indicators Part 5 – Scottish Government Statistics
2	Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website Part 1 – Quality of Outcomes Case Study 3
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications</li> <li>• clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</li> </ul> Part 1 - Quality of Outcomes Case Studies 1 and 3 Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 6
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant' Part 1 – Governance Case study 9 Part 5A
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published Part 1 – Culture of Continuous Improvement Case Study 13 Part 4C
6	Continuous improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators</li> <li>• progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report</li> </ul> Part 1- Culture of Continuous Improvement Case study 12 Part 4 – National Headline Indicators Part 5 – Scottish Government Statistics

Performance Marker	Part of PPF report demonstrating evidence for this marker
<b>Promoting The Plan-Led System</b>	
7	LDP less than 5 years since adoption Part 4A
8	Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on course for adoption within 5-year cycle</li> <li>• project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</li> </ul> Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 5
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 5 Part 1 – Governance Case Study 7
10	Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation Part 1 – Quality of Outcome Case Study 2 Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 5 Part 1 – Governance Case Study 8 Part 1 – Culture of Continuous Improvement Case Study 11
11	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications Part 1 – Culture of Continuous Improvement Case Studies 11 and 13

## Appendix 2 – Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies Checklist

Performance Marker	Part of PPF report demonstrating evidence for this marker
<b>Simplifying And Streamlining</b>	
12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g. protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)	Part 1 – Governance Case Studies 8, 9 and 10 Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 4 Part 1 – Culture of Continuous Improvement Case Study 14
13 Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Part 1 – Culture of Continuous Improvement Case Study 12 Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement Case Study 6
<b>Delivering Development</b>	
14 Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old	Part 1 – Quality of Outcomes Case Study 3
15 Developer contributions: clear expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and</li> <li>• in pre-application discussions</li> </ul>	Part 1 – Governance Case Study 8

Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study
Design	3	Interdisciplinary Working	9 and 10
Conservation	1	Collaborative Working	9 and 10
Regeneration	1 and 3	Community Engagement	5 and 12
Environment	2 and 6	Placemaking	5 and 7
Greenspace	6	Charettes	5
Town Centres	11	Place Standard	
Masterplanning	2, 5 and 7	Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	5 and 11	Process Improvement	10 and 14
Housing Supply		Project Management	14
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	12
Economic Development	1 and 3	Staff Training	12
Enforcement	13	Online Systems	
Development Management Processes	8, 9 and 14	Transport	7
Active Travel	7		
Planning Applications	1 and 3		
Other: Sustainability	6		

# PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

2019 - 2020

