



NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK



Performance Assessment Template

Cohort 2 - March 2025

Bute • Helenstburgh • Islay • Oban • Mull • Campbeltown • Iona • Dunoon • Tiree • Lochgilphead • Seil ...

#abplace2b

1. Please use this template for the self-assessment. Please state the planning authority and lead officer below.

Planning Authority:	Argyll and Bute Council
Lead officer:	Fergus Murray
Email:	Fergus.Murray@argyll-bute.gov.uk

2. Please use the below matrix when determining what score you are giving each attribute. We ask that if you score a 1 or 2 that you provide a good practice example, a separate template for this will be provided.

 PRIORITISE	 REVIEW	 DEVELOP	 BUILD UPON	 CONSOLIDATE
No progress	Making limited progress	Making fair progress	Making good progress	Making excellent progress
5	4	3	2	1
Prioritise fundamental review and revisit approach taken. Engage with NPI Learn from others	Review ambition Review approach taken Inform NPI Learn from others	Increase ambition in targets Review and improve implementation	Increase ambition in targets Share learning with others	Share learning with others

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**Attribute 11: Supporting the Delivery of Sustainable,
Liveable, and Productive Places**

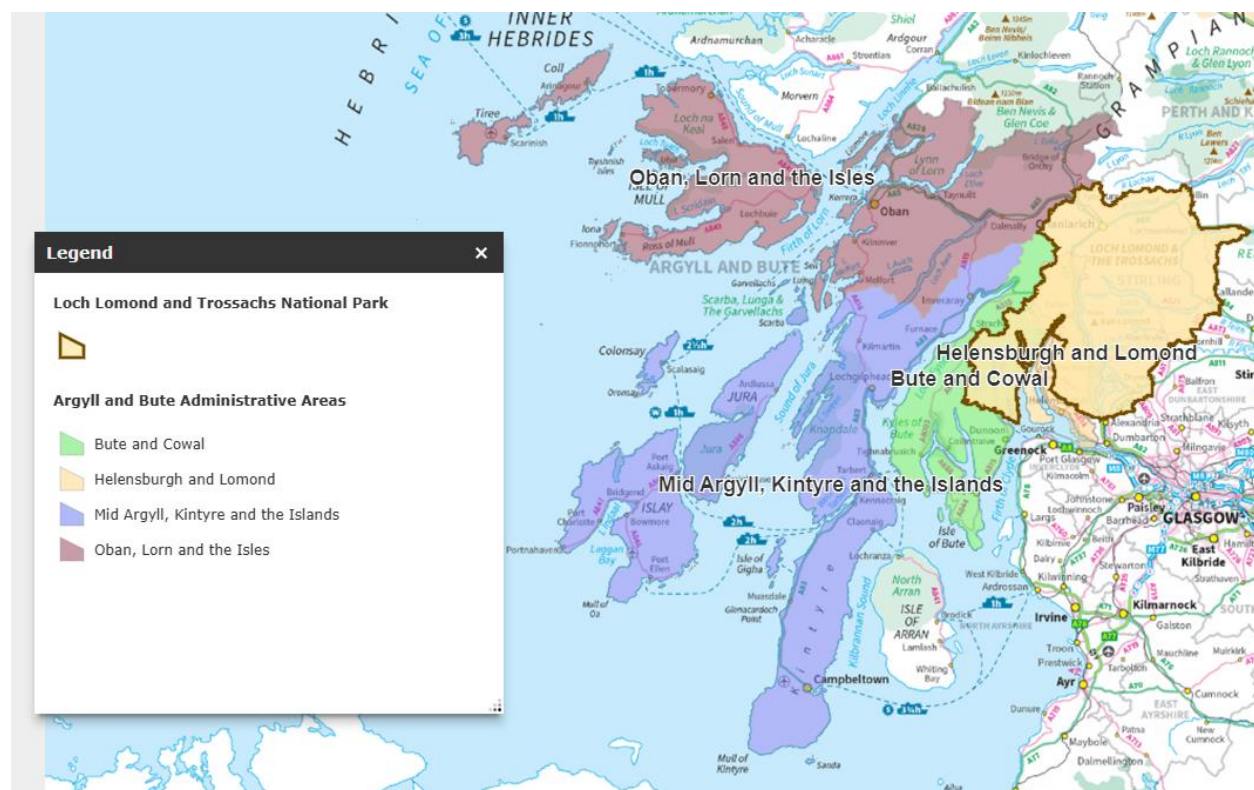
**Attribute 12: Supporting the Delivery of Consented
Development**

Improvement Plan: Place Theme

Introduction & Context

Argyll and Bute Council as Planning Authority covers the area of Argyll and Bute Council but excludes land within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. All planning matters within the National Park boundary fall under the remit of the National Park Board.

The responsibility for the determination of planning and related applications is delegated to the Council-wide Planning, Protective Services and Licencing (PPSL) Committee; additional delegation to officers to determine non-contentious items is also provided. Historically the geographical scale of Argyll and Bute has necessitated administration across 4 areas. Whilst this is no longer the case for the administration of planning functions local team structures continue to be generally aligned with these areas.



The Council’s Planning Service lies within the remit of the Executive Director for Development and Infrastructure Services, and sits within the Development & Economic Growth Service.

The Planning Service is comprised of two teams, Development Policy and Development Management. The Development Policy Team is primarily responsible for the preparation of the Local Development Plan and associated planning guidance. The Development Management

Service is responsible for the assessment of planning and related applications. The planning function is integrated with the function of the wider Development and Economic Growth Service which also includes Buildings Standards, Environmental Health, Housing, Economic Development, and the Rural Growth Deal teams. This grouping of services provides the opportunity to ensure integration of delivery whilst working toward wider corporate objectives, including the Rural Growth Deal, Housing Delivery, and Strategic Development Frameworks.

The National Planning Improvement Framework report highlights that in addition to fulfilling our statutory requirements as the planning authority, the Council's Planning Service works closely with other Council Services and external partners on a range of activities.



A high performing planning authority needs to have the right number of people to do the work expected of it with the right skills set. It also needs to have a strategy to ensure that it retains and recruits the right staff in the future. It supports staff to upskill and to be prepared for changes in policy, legislation, and new circumstances.

ATTRIBUTE 1: THIS PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS SUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND SKILLS TO MAXIMISE PRODUCTIVITY

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

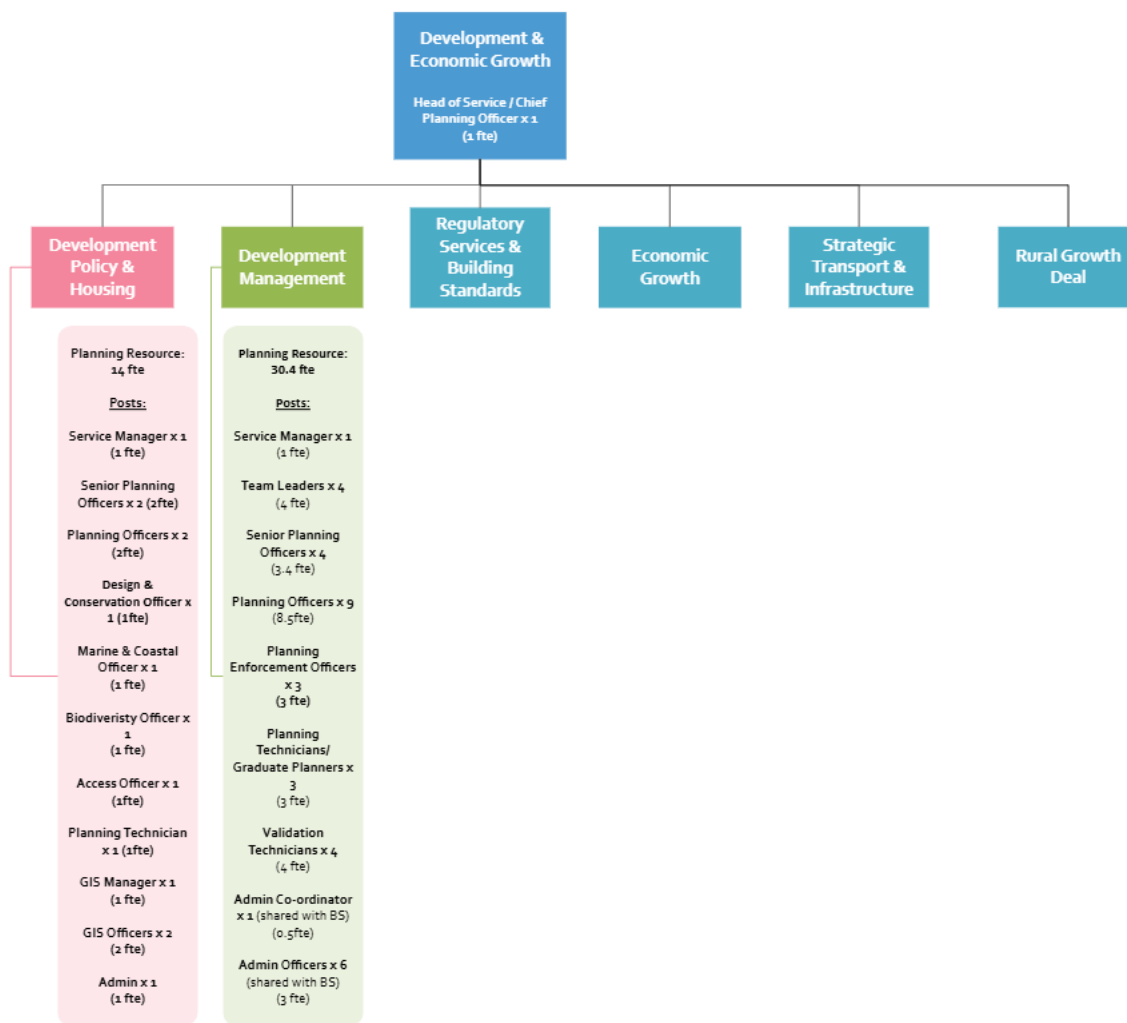
- Does the planning authority have the sufficient level of staff to carry out all activities within the required timeframes?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current budget?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current income?
- Does the planning authority received responses from consultees within the prescribed timescale when assessing planning applications?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to access the appropriate advice, expertise, evidence and data it requires?

Narrative

Planning Service

Along with other planning authorities across Scotland, Argyll and Bute has found the recruitment and retention of qualified planning officers and related specialist support staff to be challenging. This issue is exacerbated by the continued pressure to deliver savings to assist the Council's budget, the additional duties which have been imposed through the National planning reform agenda and the disruption and additional complexity in the processing of planning applications following the introduction of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

Previously savings have been delivered by a downsizing of both Development Management and Development Policy staff numbers and the introduction of discretionary charges. An improving position on statutory fee income has however provided the confidence to increase staff resource in order to address issues with capacity and resilience that had become evident. In PPF 12 we identified an improvement action to recruit 6 additional posts across the Planning Service and have delivered on this as of Summer 2024. Workload pressure arising from a backlog of planning applications has necessitated the use of additional agency staff on a temporary basis since Nov. 2023.



Overview of Service Delivery Activities

Development Management:

- Processing and determining planning and related applications, and prior notifications/approval submissions

- Processing and determining listed building and conservation area applications
- Processing and determining applications for advertisement consent
- Processing and determining hazardous substances consents
- Processing and determining applications seeking a High Hedge Notice
- Processing and determining requests for EIA Screening / Scoping Opinions
- Assessing and responding to consultations under S36/S37 of the Electricity Act, and representing the Council at Public Local Inquiry in these matters.
- Tree Preservation Orders and Protection of trees in conservation areas
- Investigating potential breaches of planning control and undertaking formal enforcement action where this is required.
- Maintenance and publication of public registers of applications / decisions / notices
- Provision of pre-application planning advice

Development Policy:

- Preparation of Local Development Plan
- Preparation of Regional Spatial Strategy
- Production of Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Housing Land Audit
- Employment Land Audit
- Provision of consultation advice on Development Plans, Biodiversity, Historic Environment, Public Access, and Coastal/Marine Interests
- Maintaining and enforcing local access rights – including Core Path Plans
- Developing and contributing toward marine and coastal local and regional policy
- Developing and contributing toward local biodiversity – including production of Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- GIS
- Production and maintenance of Corporate Address Gazetteer

Workforce Information

The Council seeks to recruit RTPI chartered professionals as a preference and values that this qualification is an indicator of professional capability that is recognised both by ourselves as an employer but also our customers and other stakeholders. The requirement for eligibility to RTPI (or equivalent) membership forms part of the Job and Person Specification for all professional planning posts. Graduate post specifications set out a requirement for candidates to have attained or at least be eligible for licentiate membership with successful candidates being

supported and working toward attainment of chartered membership aligned with a permanent post where this is available.

	RTPI Qualified Staff - Headcount			
	Chartered RTPI Membership	Licentiate Membership	Other	Accreditation not Required
Head of Service (Chief Planning Officer)	1	-	-	-
Development Management	19	2	2	11
Development Policy	5	1	-	8
Economic Growth	2			

The workforce profile is subject to regular review with colleagues in HR to identify risks arising from an aging workforce, and to inform succession planning activity with the aim of avoiding a skills deficit arising as a result of planned retirements.

	Staff Age Profile			
	Dev. Management		Dev. Policy	
	Sept. 2021	Nov. 2023	Sept. 2021	Nov. 2023
Average Age	48 years	47 years	50 years	50years
20 and Under	0%	0%	0%	0%
21-25	3%	0%	3%	5%
26-35	13%	20%	14%	14%
36-44	23%	21%	3%	7%
45-54	24%	24%	36%	29%
55-59	24%	21%	25%	21%
60-65	13%	14%	19%	24%
66 and over	0%	0%	0%	0%

Budget/Income

The Development Management Service's statutory and non-statutory budget targets and actual receipts are set out below. Budget targets are set based on the average income over the last 5 years, and receipts are monitored on a monthly basis for budget management purposes. Budget targets were adjusted in 2021/22 to factor in expected reduction in income arising from the impact of the Covid pandemic. Budget targets have also been increased by £300k for 2024/25 in

anticipation of increased income arising from the uplift to planning fees, with the additional income being reinvested to fund increased staff resource within the planning service.

	DM Budget Targets / Income Received					
	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	Budget	Income Received	Budget	Income Received	Budget	Income Received
Statutory Planning Fees (inc. S36/S37)	£0.81m*	£0.92m (+£110k)	£1.18m	£1.90m (+£720k)	£1.18m	£1.42m (+£240k)
Discretionary Pre-application Fees	£75k	£56k (-£19k)	£75k	£53k (-£22k)	£75k	£44k (-£31k)
Variance	+£91k		+£698k		+£209k	

Consultation Response Timescales

The Planning Service is fortunate that the primary internal consultees (Roads and Environmental Health) lie within the same Directorate which facilitates discussion on prioritisation and resourcing. Recruitment and resourcing within these complementary service delivery areas has nonetheless been an evident limitation to planning performance and whilst internal working arrangements have been augmented through regular inter-service meetings this remains an ongoing issue and an improvement action to review and renegotiate our internal service level agreements with Roads and Environmental Health, and to understand and promote their resource requirements for effective engagement in the planning process has been identified with the aim of reducing the time taken for internal consultations.

	Consultation Response Time – Average No. of Days		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Internal	23	24.4	23.6
External	13	15	16.5

	Number of Consultations Undertaken		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Internal	1051	1277	1100
External	1172	1271	1179

Access to Advice, Expertise, Evidence and Data

The Development Policy Team includes officers who specialise in dealing with Access Rights, Marine and Coastal Development, Biodiversity, and Design and Conservation. These officers are primarily deployed to undertake statutory duties of the Council within those fields, to contribute their expertise to the development of spatial land use policies, and to provide consultation input on planning applications.

External contractors are utilised to provide advice on landscape and noise impact assessments for windfarm development, and for the peer review of mineral and restoration bonds. External contractors are engaged via the Council's Procurement Team.

The Council's internet 'The Hub' is utilised to make a range of GIS data sets available for internal use corporately across the Council. This includes access to historic mapping, land and property asset registers, electoral boundaries, and the Local Development Plan but also includes themed data sets which are utilised by different Council Services for specific purposes. These include planning history and constraints, and the Council's Renewable Energy Action Plan.

The Planning Service is always looking to identify any gaps in data resources and had recently identified that data sets that were being utilised to identify previous prospectively contaminative land uses was unreliable due to be incomplete. In response the Development Management Service has co-funded additional research into prospectively contaminative previous land uses which will be captured in GIS and, once completed, will be utilised as a constraints layer that will provide a more reliable and efficient means of engaging the Council's Contaminated Land Officer to inform the assessment of planning applications.

ATTRIBUTE 2: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS A VALUED AND SUPPORTED WORKFORCE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have a workforce planning strategy in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to support staff development and upskilling and send staff on relevant courses?
- Does the planning authority have a deliverable commitment to support staff health and wellbeing?

Narrative:

Workforce Planning Strategy

Workforce planning strategy is reviewed annually with colleagues in the Council's HR Service. Opportunities are identified to create career development pathways both by creation of entry level roles with supported training, and redesign of structures and roles to provide breadth of experience and opportunities. Continual monitoring of the workforce profile allows for planned transfer of skills and knowledge to mitigate impact of retirements.

Supporting Staff Development

The Council promotes the use of Performance and Career Conversations. The majority of performance conversations are informal and part of the day-to-day dialogue between a manager and an employee although more formal procedures may be appropriate to provide a record of planned development, or where improvements are required. Each team has an identified training budget; in addition to training and events organised by the service, staff are encouraged to attend work-related events and to provide feedback to colleagues. The service aims for all staff to have at least one formal Career Conversation each year to inform their development alongside regular one-to-one and team meetings. Identified training requirements are utilised to inform the forthcoming year's training programme.

Staff Feedback – Service Improvement Actions

Staff feedback is largely provided via line managers or within the format of Career Conversations; currently staff surveys are undertaken corporately and are not service specific. The Development Management Service Plan identifies a requirement for service specific staff surveys as part of a suite of indicators that are intended to measure whether staff are valued and supported, and to promote staff retention and successful recruitment.

Staff Health and Wellbeing

It is recognised that the events of the Covid pandemic, difficulties in recruiting new staff and the implementation of the national planning reform agenda have resulted in the Council’s planning staff enduring significant additional work pressures over an extended period of time. Whilst underlying issues arising from staffing capacity and a backlog of casework have largely been resolved it is recognised that there is still considerable work to be done to ensure that staff have the appropriate knowledge, skillset, support, and confidence to operate effectively in a rapidly changing environment. The Development Management Service Plan identifies a range of indicators which are intended to measure the health and wellbeing of planning staff and whether their development needs are adequately supported. These include monitoring of absence, and staff retention, upper limit targets for individual case lists, ensuring that health and safety policies remain up to date, and asking leavers to undertake a survey. The DM Improvement Action Plan identifies a number of additional actions to improve training, engagement and to obtain feedback from staff on whether they feel valued and supported. These actions include the introduction of an annual staff away day as an opportunity for training, team & morale building, and an opportunity to reflect on the outcome of decisions.

	Average Length of Service	
	Dev. Management	Dev. Policy
Sept 2021	6.8 years	14.5 years
Nov 2023	6.3 years	14.1 years

Improvement Action Plan (People theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
1. The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	2
2. The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce	3

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS RELATED TO PEOPLE THEME						
Improvement Action No.	Improvement Action	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short Term: <1 year Medium Term: 1-3 years Long Term:>3 years	Resources	NPIF Attribute(s)
1.	Review of Internal Consultee Arrangements with Roads and Environmental Health <i>See related DM Improvement Plan Actions: 2:10, 2:11, and 4:01</i>	Development Management	High	Short-term	Service Development	1 - Resources & Skills

2.	<p>Introduce annual survey of Development Management and Policy staff</p> <p><i>See related DM Service Plan Objective 11.</i></p>	Development Management / Development Policy	High	Short-term	Service Development	2 – Valued & Supported Workforce
3.	<p>Introduce annual DM/Planning Staff Away Day</p> <p><i>See related DM Improvement Action: 3:03</i></p>	Development Management	Medium	Short-term	Service Development	2 – Valued & Supported Workforce
4.	<p>Delivery of training to improve number of planning officers with Carbon Literacy Qualification</p>	Corporate	Medium	Medium	Delivery by ACT.	<p>1 - Resources & Skills</p> <p>3 – Embedded Continuous Improvement</p>
5.	<p>Implement Mini-Service Redesign To Improve Clarity of Responsibilities & Create Career Path</p>	Development Policy	High	Short	Internal	<p>1 - Resources & Skills</p> <p>2 – Valued & Supported Workforce</p>

18.	Employ dedicated housing delivery officers to coordinate cross service facilitation of development	Corporate	High	Short	Corporate	1 - Resources & Skills 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes 9 – Good Customer Care 12 - Supporting Delivery of Development
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A high performing planning authority has a positive culture through ensuring it has sound governance, effective leadership and a commitment to continuous improvement. The authority has an identified chief planner, who is supported by a strong leadership group to advise on decision-making, policy and operational management.

ATTRIBUTE 3: THIS PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EMBEDDED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority undertaken an annual assessment of its performance and acted upon areas previously identified as in need of improvement?
- Has the planning authority achieved recognition at relevant awards or through performance accreditation frameworks?
- Has the planning authority engaged in peer review, good practice exchange or improvement activities?
- Has the planning authority addressed any complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and have evidence of this and that it has learned from valid cases?

Narrative

Performance Assessment

The Council has previously reflected and reported on its annual performance through the submission of a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) to the Scottish Government, and will continue to do so through the new arrangements under NPIF.

In addition to bi-annual statutory reporting requirements for Scottish Government statistical returns, the performance of the Development Management Service is reported to the Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing (PPSL) Committee on a quarterly basis; monthly service performance updates are also provided to the Exec. Director/Policy Lead. Reports on team and individual officer performance are provided to the DM Management Team on a monthly basis to assist in team and individual performance management.

Team Plan / Improvement Actions

The [Development Management Service Plan 2024 – 2026](#) reflects on an extremely challenging period where the performance of the Development Management Service deteriorated significantly. In addition to identifying the issues which have impacted adversely on performance, the Service Plan identifies a range of Improvement Actions which support recovery of Development Management performance across the four key areas of:

- (i) Resourcing;
- (ii) Processing arrangements;
- (iii) Staff attraction, retention, and wellbeing; and,
- (iv) Communication and engagement.

The Development Management Service Plan also updates previous service delivery targets and identifies a range of additional performance indicators that will be utilised to measure and report on the success/improvement of the DM Service.

Complaints

Planning is a topic which naturally tends to polarise opinions and consequently it is not unexpected that this will give rise to complaints, particularly from members of the public who feel dis-satisfied with the outcome of the planning process. Recent times have however seen significant disruption and changes to delivery arrangements over a whole range of Council Services which has resulted in a 300%+ increase in complaints received by the Council. The deteriorating performance of the Development Management Service in terms of timeliness of determination and a reduced ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders has seen the volume of complaints increase during 2022/23 and 2023/24 both in volume and as a proportion of the total number of complaints received by the Council.

	Complaints About Service Delivery/Outcomes			
	2021/22 (% of ABC)	2022/23 (% of ABC)	2023/24 (% of ABC)	2024/25 to end Jan 2025 (% of ABC)
Development Management	7 (4.1%)	49 (6.6%)	45 (6.1%)	30 (4.34%)
Development Policy	4 (2.3%)	6 (0.8%)	4 (0.5%)	1 (0.14%)
ABC Corporate Total	170 (100%)	740 (100%)	736 (100%)	691 (100%)

Improving staff numbers, reducing caseload pressure and the introduction of new processes seeking to formalise extensions to determination periods and better manage customer expectations has resulted in a significant improvement in the year to date.

Sharing Good Practice

Development Policy Staff regularly attend and chair on a rotating basis the Norther Authorities Development Plan Group, and the HOPS Development Planning Sub-Committee.

Development Policy Planners attend the Argyll and Bute Housing Partnership Forum, and HIREP Housing Sub-Group. Development Management staff attend the HOPS DM Sub-Group, the Local Authority Aquaculture Group, and internal Area Property Action Groups (APAGs).

Development Management and Policy Planners have worked in close partnership with SSEN, DRAX and the Scottish Government Energy Consents unit to develop a new approach to providing accommodation for construction workers on major infrastructure projects. This has resulted in the requirement for Workforce Housing Strategies that demonstrate how and where all construction workers will be accommodated throughout an investment project, and how any adverse impact on the wider housing system will be avoided or mitigated. This approach is developing into an industry standard approach.

The Planning Service reviews and responds to Scottish and UK Government consultations that are relevant to planning, where necessary this includes briefing elected members and securing a corporate Council position.

ATTRIBUTE 4: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS SOUND GOVERNANCE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an effective scheme of delegation in place?
- Have all councillors who exercise a planning function undergone statutory training and is there is evidence of ongoing training for members?
- Have more than x % of officer recommendations have been overturned by councillors at committee or Local Review Body.

Narrative

Scheme of Delegation

The Council's [Scheme of Delegation](#) to Officers was reviewed by Full Council and updated in October 2024. The scheme of delegation continues to operate effectively with 97.9% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2023/24. During this period 96.4% of applications were approved demonstrating the effectiveness of an up-to-date plan led system, flexible/pro-development policies which are aligned to the Council's corporate priority of delivering sustainable economic growth, and a commitment to delivering positive outcomes.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total Number of Determinations	1,208	1,042	1,167
% Delegated Decisions	98%	99.5%	97.9%
% Applications Approved	98%	99.5%	96.4%

Councillor Training

All elected members participating in the determination of planning applications require to undertake mandatory planning training prior to serving on the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing Committee, or as a member of a Local Review Body. Member development is further supported by an [annual training programme](#) that is delivered online by officers and external stakeholders.

The topics covered in the Planning Service's recent training programmes include:

- The planning process (ABC DM Officer)
- National Planning Framework 4 (ABC Policy Officer)
- New regulations for the production of Local Development Plans (ABC Policy Officer)
- Core Paths (ABC Access Officer)
- Appeals (DPEA)
- Landscape and Visual Assessment (ABC Policy Officer)
- ABC Roads Development Guide (ABC Roads Officer)
- Aquaculture (Various stakeholders and site visits – developers and consultees)
- Forestry (FLS)
- SEPA's role in the planning process and Flooding (SEPA)
- Natura Sites and Appropriate Assessments (Nature Scot)
- Biodiversity Net Gain (ABC Local Biodiversity Officer)
- Electricity Act – S36/S37 Procedures (ABC DM Officer)
- Housing Land Audit (ABC Policy Officer)
- Nature Scot's role in the planning process (Nature Scot)
- Historic Environment Scotland's role in the planning process (HES)
- Local Review Bodies (ABC Legal / external provider)

The training plan is officer led, developed by the Planning Service and agreed by elected Members with an opportunity for Members to identify subject matter for inclusion in the upcoming year's training programme.

Overtured Recommendations (Appeal / Local Review)

Where required by the Scheme of Delegation, officer recommendations on planning applications and the Council's response to S36/S37 consultations are submitted to the Planning, Protective Services and Licencing (PPSL) Committee for determination. Local Review Body's review the outcome of delegated decisions by officers.

There is no pattern or frequency of the number of officer recommendations overturned at PPSL Committee or by Local Review Bodies to indicate that there is a gap or deficiency in policy or guidance. In addition to presenting officers, planning committees are also attended by a senior planning officer; members are assisted in their running of Committee and LRB meetings by senior members of the Council's Governance team to ensure that decision making is based on the appropriate planning context and framework.

	Overturned Officer Recommendations/Decisions					
	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	Total Items	Officer Advice Overturned (%)	Total Items	Officer Advice Overturned (%)	Total Items	Officer Advice Overturned (%)
PPSL Committee	29	1 (3.4%)	24	1 (4.2%)	25	0
Local Review Body	6	4 (66.6%)	2	0	5	2 (40%)

ATTRIBUTE 5: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an identified Chief Planning Officer in place?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise on corporate decision making and policy within the broader organisation?
- Is the planning authority's Chief Planning Officer a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise and support external bodies through engagement in organisations' committees, advisory groups or working groups?
- Does the planning authority have a strong leadership team that supports a culture of continuous improvement?

Narrative

Chief Planning Officer

In November 2024, the Council formally appointed the Head of Development and Economic Growth, who is MRPTI, to undertake the duties of Chief Planning Officer. This role, including direct responsibility for Environmental Health, Building Standards, Housing Services, Economic Development, Strategic Transport, Projects and Regeneration, is ideally placed to influence the strategic direction and development activity within the Council and the Council Area.

Service Management Arrangements

The Development Policy and Development Management teams are subject to separate management arrangements however each are led by qualified planners who are RTPI accredited. The Development Management and Policy Service hold management meetings on a monthly basis. Review of performance is a standing item for discussion.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Development Management Service surveys its customers including applicant/agents on the service provided to them during the processing of individual applications. Whilst responses to specific issues generally receive a good response very little feedback is received in relation to the processing of applications which is restricted to use by applicants/agents. An improvement action is identified to undertake a review of the existing arrangements for the post-application customer satisfaction survey with the intention of securing increased feedback from a wider range of customers to include consultees and third parties.

Freedom of Information Requests

Data/information held by the Council is available to request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004. [Requests for information](#) are subject to a corporate process for recording and response.

The Planning Service holds a significant volume of information which is accumulated in the preparation of the Local Development Plan, in the processing of planning applications, and the enforcement of breaches of planning control. Whilst demand overtime has seen an increase in the number of requests received by the Council for information the volume of service specific requests received by the Planning Service have decreased as a proportion of corporate demand and is taken to be a healthy indicator that information relevant to planning is made sufficiently accessible through the Council website and the Planning Portal.

(% of ABC Total)	Number of FOI/EIR Requests		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Development Management	45 (3.42%)	49 (2.97%)	62 (3.78%)
Development Policy	16 (1.22%)	20 (1.2%)	11 (0.67%)
ABC Corporate Total	1312 (100%)	1647 (100%)	1641 (100%)

Complaints

The Council has a corporate [Complaints Process](#) for recording and responding to complaints that relate to dissatisfaction with service delivery. Where complaints are not satisfactorily resolved complainants have the ability to take those matters up with the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

Improvement Action Plan (Culture theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
3. This Planning Authority has embedded continuous improvement	3
4. This Planning Authority has sound governance	2
5. This Planning Authority has effective leadership	2

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS RELATED TO CULTURE THEME						
Improvement Action No.	Improvement Action	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short Term: <1 year Medium Term: 1-3 years Long Term:>3 years	Resources	NPIF Attribute(s)
4.	Delivery of training to improve number of planning officers with Carbon Literacy Qualification	Corporate	Medium	Medium	Delivery by ACT.	1 - Resources & Skills 3 – Embedded Continuous Improvement
6.	Maintain an up to date DM Team Plan <i>Current DM Team Plan covers 2024-26</i>	Development Management	Medium	Medium-term	Service Development:	3 – Embedded Continuous Improvement

7.	<p>Improved Customer Satisfaction Survey – to include wider range of stakeholders and improved level of feedback.</p> <p><i>Linked to DM Service Plan Objective 3.</i></p>	Development Management	Medium	Short-term	Service Development:	<p>5 – Effective Leadership</p> <p>10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders</p>
8.	Develop and Pilot Place Based Board to deliver coordinated cross service and public sector improvements	Corporate	Medium	Short	Council Services and Community Planning Partners	<p>4 – Sound Governance</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>
27.	Development of Service / Team / Individual Performance Dashboards utilising capabilities MS Power BI to improve performance reporting and management	Development Management / IT Service	Medium	Medium	Corporate	<p>3 – Embedded Continuous Improvement</p> <p>7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>



A high performing planning authority needs to have an effective local development plan and other strategies in place to provide a vision for the future of the area. It needs to be able to set and deliver on policy ambitions and priorities by clearly informing decision making and providing certainty and predictability for communities, developers and investment. The authority's development management systems need to be effective in making the right decisions about development and be efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

ATTRIBUTE 6: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS A ROBUST POLICY AND EVIDENCE BASE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an up to date Local Development Plan in place and/ or is on track to adoption?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Regional Spatial Strategy in place/ or on track to adoption?
- Has the planning authority's Local Development Plan Evidence Report been approved by the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals and/ or on track for approval?
- Have the application of the Local Development Plan's policies been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review?

Narrative

Local Development Plan (Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2024)

The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 was adopted on 28th February 2024, and replaces the Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015 and its associated Supplementary Guidance (March 2016), and Supplementary Guidance 2 (December 2016).

Regional Spatial Strategy

There is an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy in place which was approved by the Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee in September 2020. The full RSS will be prepared once regulations and guidance are available.

Local Development Plan Scheme

The Council produced the first Local Development Plan Scheme for LDP3 in March 2024. The DPS shows the Evidence Report programmed for submission to Scottish Ministers by Sept 2025. Work is currently still on-track. Adoption of LDP3 is programmed for March 2029.

Local Development Plan Policies

At the date of writing the application of the LDP2's policies have not been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review.

ATTRIBUTE 7: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY MAKES BEST USE OF DATA AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?
- Does the planning authority have a data governance strategy in place for the management of planning data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use interactive web-mapping, GIS and spatial data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use digital approaches to engagement, including website, social media and other platforms?

Narrative

e-Development Portal

The Development Management Service has promoted the principle of online submission of applications and supporting documentation utilising the e-Planning Portal and by e-mail for application/notification types that are not currently able to be submitted via the portal. In 2023/24, 98.4% of submissions were submitted electronically.

	Method of Submission		
	20221/22	2022/23	2023/24
e-Planning Portal	1573 (76.55%)	1442 (71.5%)	1362 (74.2%)
Email	444 (21.6%)	550 (27.3%)	450 (24.5%)
Paper Hardcopy	38 (1.85%)	25 (1.2%)	24 (1.3%)

Guidance to assist applicants with the preparation of submissions and direction to the e-Planning portal is set out on the Council's website. An administrative charge is in place to cover related administrative costs involved in the digitisation and uploading of hardcopy documents to the electronic casework system.

Data Governance

The Service has published a [Data Privacy Statement](#) advising customers how their information will be used and managed. We have also published a [Data Retention Schedule](#) and utilise tools within both back office case work and electronic document managements systems to remove data and files which no longer require to be retained.

Interactive Web Mapping, GIS, Spatial Data

The majority of data held by the Planning Service is spatial data. All planning constraints are digitised and available on a corporate GIS platform for planning and other Council officers to utilise. Spatial constraint data is also held within the Uniform back-office system and is automatically pulled through to the case file during the validation process.

The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 is available in multiple formats, including a [Story Map](#) in addition to downloadable 'static' documents. Officers also have access to LDP2 in a more flexible GIS format that allows designations and constraints to be viewed alongside other data sets including planning application polygons.

The [Housing Land Audit 2023](#) has been published in a story map format.

Back Office Casework / Workflow / Document Management Systems

The Development Management Service have previously identified short-comings in the efficiency of service delivery arrangements which arise from a lack of integration between back office DM systems used for casework management, workflow and document management. Issues include disjointed electronic workflow, double handling of some tasks, and limited functionality within the Public Access environment. A previous improvement action had sought to bring back office functions under the umbrella of a single software supplier to address these issues with Development Management participating in a multi-Service project led by ABC IT. Due to issues outwith the control of the Council, this project was cancelled during 2024. Moving forward, the Development Management component of that project team will now focus on identifying and delivering enhanced functionality which will seek to maximise the potential of our existing systems. The Development Management Service has also engaged in corporate pilot projects led by the Council's IT Service which are investigating the scope for use of Artificial Intelligence to assist Council Officers in the undertaking of their duties, and the deployment of MS PowerBI to increase the automation of performance reporting activities utilising data from backoffice systems to populate dashboards that can be utilised to monitor performance and plan work activity at Corporate / Service / Team / Individual level.

ATTRIBUTE 8: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have the ability to make decisions on planning applications within the required timeframes?
- Are less than x% of planning decisions overturned at appeal or judicial review?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Enforcement Charter in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to resolve enforcement cases?

Narrative

In PPF 12, Argyll and Bute set out an improvement action for the performance of its Development Management Service which was to be measured through improving trends in determination time periods, reduction in an identified casework backlog, and a reduction in undetermined legacy cases. Whilst it is recognised that there is still considerable improvement to be made in relation to timeliness of determination it is highlighted that significant improvement has been made in relation to all other matters identified, and that a review of underlying factors in relation to timeliness of determination provide a strong indicator toward improvement being realised.

DM Customer Charter

The [Development Management Customer Charter](#) provides an easy to access overview of the planning application process and sets out expectations for the standard of service and timeliness. The Charter provides a guide for both customers and officers about how the planning application process will be delivered. The Charter promotes efficiency in the determination of applications and commits officers to engage with applicants to overcome barriers to a successful outcome but also empowers them to progress applications to a timely conclusion where this is not possible.

Validation

Planning applications are received and validated by the Council's Central Validation Team (CVT). During PPF12 it was identified that the functionality of the CVT had been significantly impacted by a lack of capacity and resilience within the team structure to cope with abnormal periods of demand arising following the pandemic. The delivery of identified improvement actions has increased the capacity of the team, provided succession planning for retirement of an

experienced staff member, and the time taken for an initial validation check has returned to being within the Council's performance target of 5 working days.

Validation Timescales			
Application Type	2021/2022 (working days)	2022/23 (working days)	2023/24 (working days)
Environmental impact Assessment (EIA)	21	0	0
Householder	19.2	15.6	3.16
Local Non-Householder	17.1	14.2	3.8
Major	21.6	21	4.5
Other	6.8	4.2	2.24

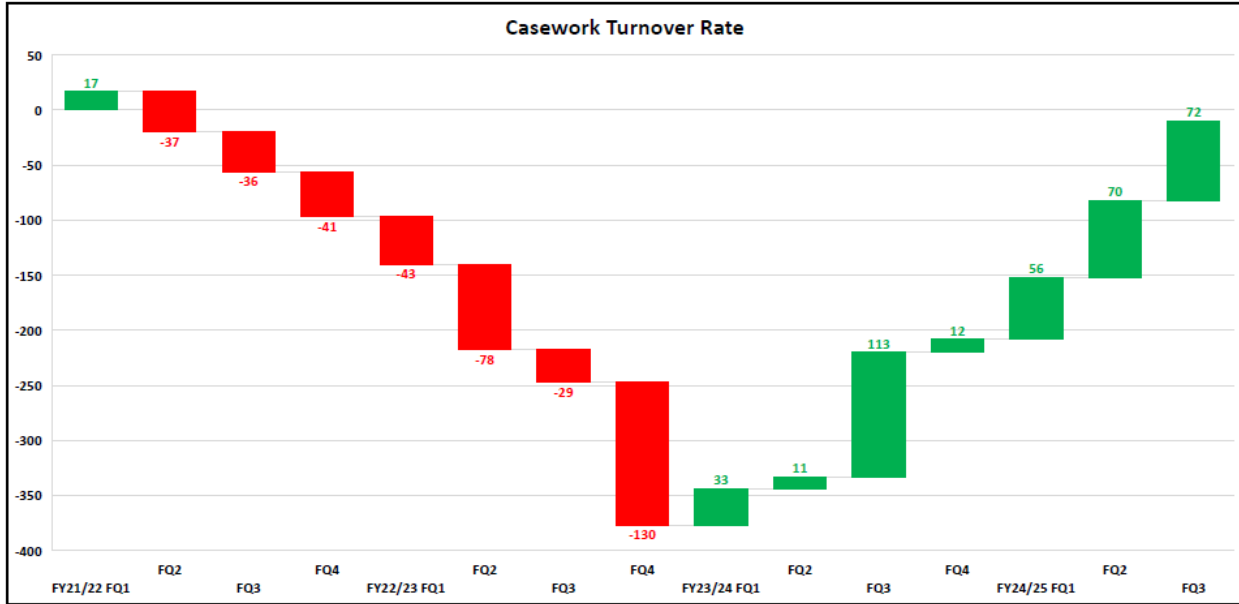
Decision Making – Determination Times

Whilst average determination time periods reported by the Scottish Government have increased since 2020/21 it is appropriate to highlight that this data set does not show the full picture as the Council has made significant progress in addressing a caseload backlog of almost 400 applications, including some 300+ 'legacy' items which were older than 12 months from validation when determined. Whilst the determination of an extraordinary volume of 'legacy' items (applications older than 12 months from validation) during 2023/24 and 2024/25 has continued to have a significant adverse effect on overall average time measures there is also evidence to confirm that the majority of applications are in fact determined to significantly faster timelines that are more closely aligned to the Council's performance standard that determinations should be within 10% of the National average. During 2024/25, Argyll and Bute has introduced new processes which encourage the use of Time Extensions to assist officers with caseload management and proactively accommodating applications that are unable to be determined within the prescribed statutory periods. This change in approach is expected to be evident in Scottish Government Statistical Returns from 2024/25 onwards and whilst it is anticipated that this will initially result in a high volume of applications subject to Time Extension although if the Service is working efficiently then this is expected to reduce overtime.

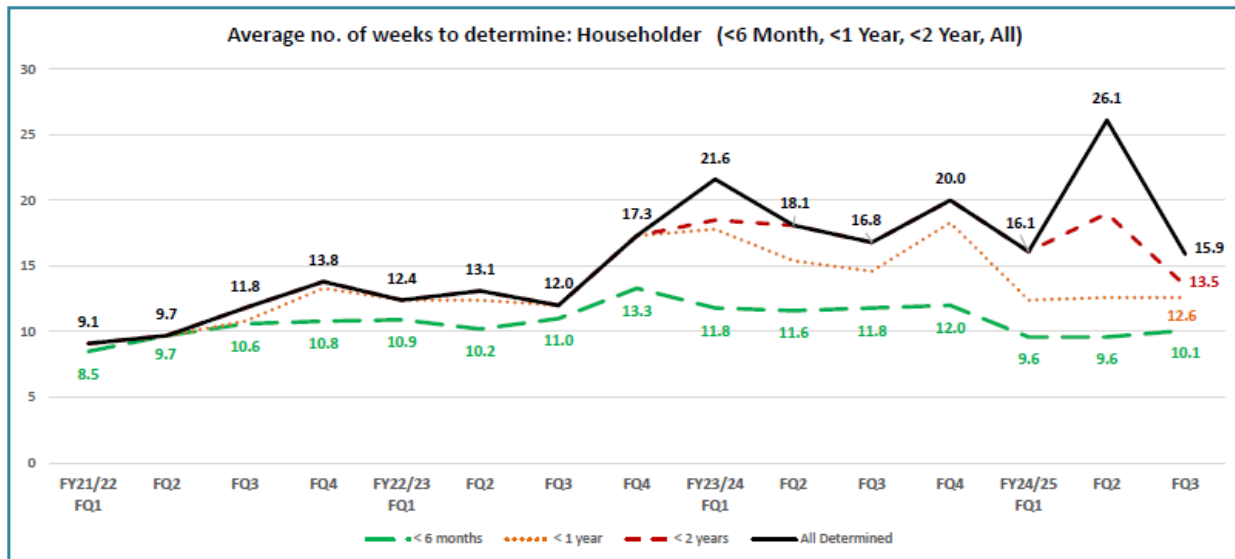
Time Taken to Determine Applications					
Application Type	Total No. of Applications 2023/24	No. of Apps subject to PPA / Time Extension 2023/24	Avg. Processing Time (Weeks) 2023/24	Avg. Processing Time (Weeks) 2022/23	Avg. Processing Time (Weeks) 2021/22
Major - All	8	0	27.9	43.1	40.8
Local - All	886		22.0	15.0	12.4
Local Non-Householder	594	0	24.1	16.3	13.6
Local - Householder	292	0	17.8	12.7	10.3
Major - Housing	2	0	41.5	46.6	76.3
Local – Housing	251	0	27.7	16.6	13.1
Major – Business & Industry	0	0	-	-	9.7
Local – Business & Industry	15	0	17.6	19.5	11.9
Local - EIA	1	0	90.1	15.1	25.2
Major with Legal Agreement	0	0	-	85.4	76.3
Local with Legal Agreement	7	0	26.7	41.0	30.3
Major – Other	1	0	25.3	29.4	46.1
Local - Other	309	0	21.8	15.4	14.1

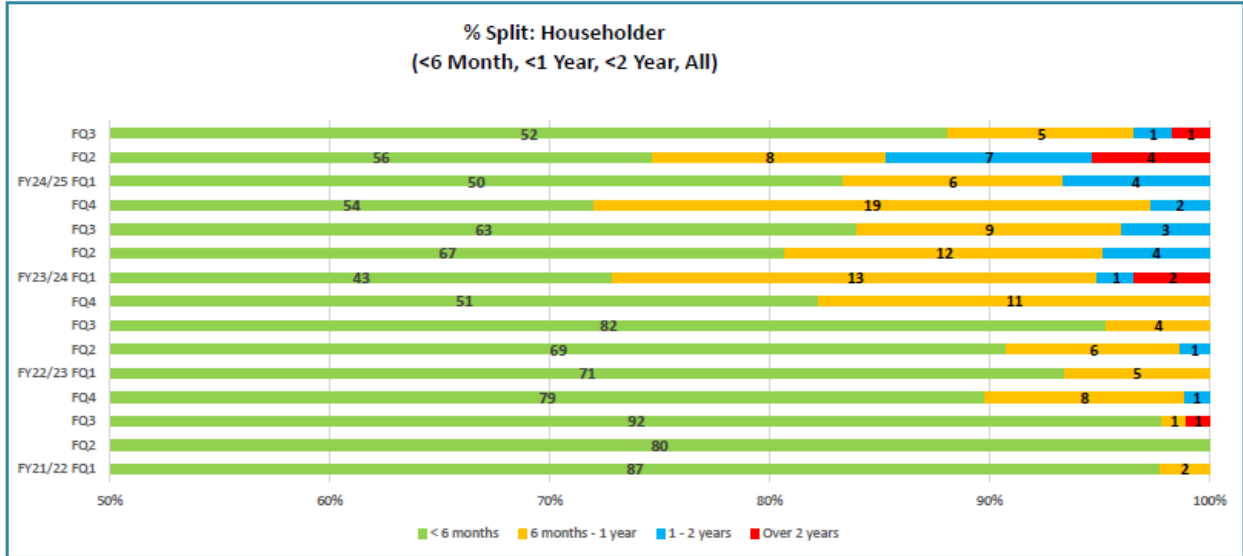
Data from [Scottish Government Statistics 2023/24](#)

A review of statutory casework turnover confirms that during 2023/24 the service managed to reverse an extended period of decline during which a backlog of statutory casework was accrued due to a lack of available staff resources and the introduction of NPF4. During 2023/24 the service was able to close 169 statutory applications more than it received during this period, and has been able to continue this positive trend into 2024/25 to date.



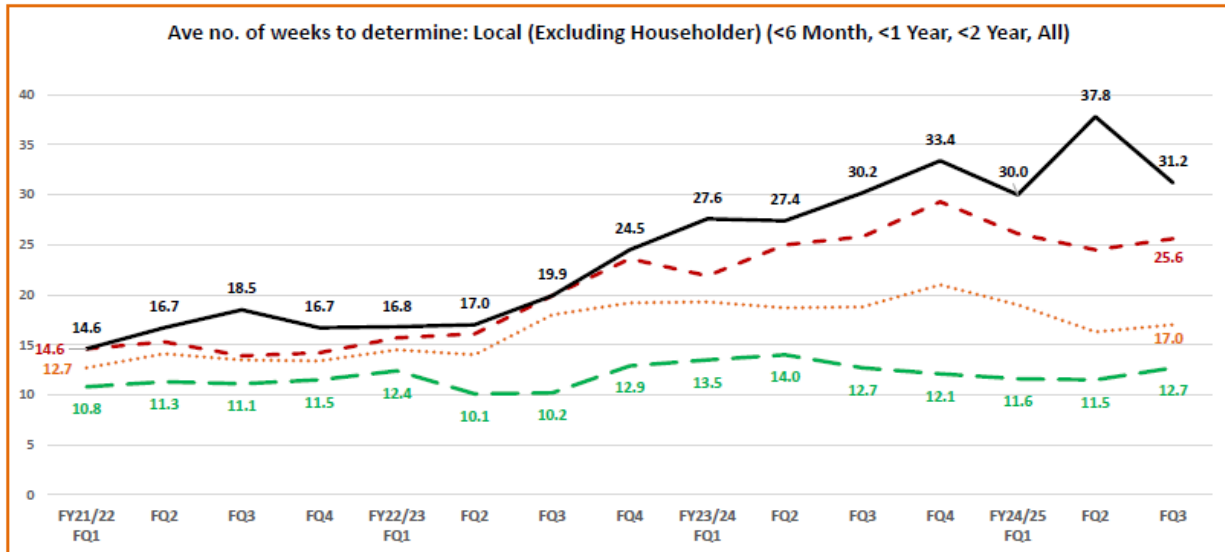
Average determination times for householder applications have increased due to a higher proportion of older 'legacy' cases being determined as the backlog of casework is cleared. During this period the majority of applications determined have continued to be newer items which are largely dealt with in much shorter timescales. With the number of 'legacy' items now reducing as a proportion of determinations the gap between the overall headline measure and the time in which the majority of casework is handled has closed significantly.

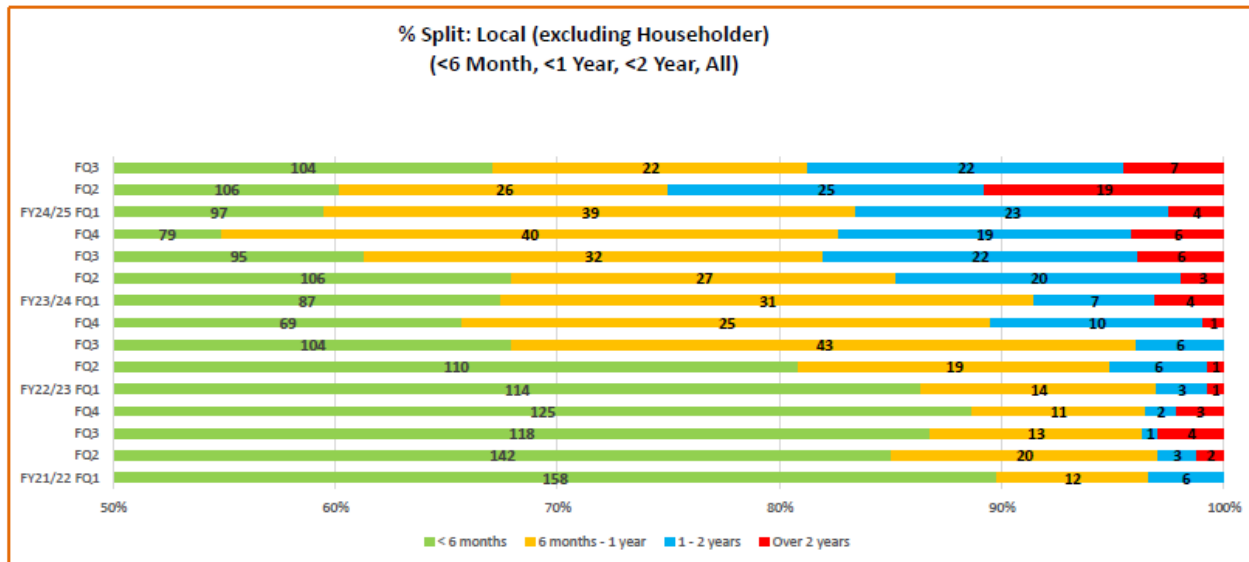




Detail on the average time taken to determine 'householder' planning applications, this is based on raw data which does not take into account any delays that might arise from matters outwith the control of the planning authority.

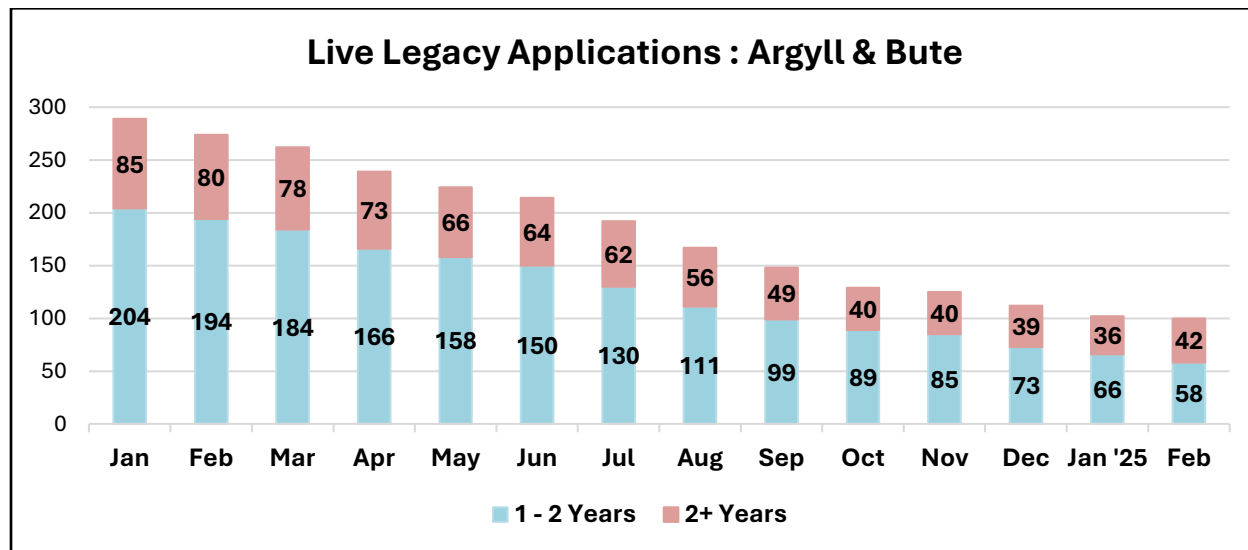
Clearing the backlog of casework has had a similar effect on the average time taken to determine local non-householder applications with an increasing proportion of 'legacy' items significantly increasing the overall average time period. Despite this significant deterioration in the overall headline performance figure the available data confirms that the majority of applications have continued to be determined within much shorter timescales.





Detail on the average time taken to determine 'local' planning applications, this is based on raw data which does not take into account any delays that might arise from matters outwith the control of the planning authority.

A breakdown of the age of applications at the time of determination evidences an increasing volume of older/'legacy' applications being determined from 2022/23 FQ4 onwards. The disproportionate impact that the resolution of these older applications has had upon average time measures over the subsequent time period is also evident; it is however highlighted that the majority of determinations (between 72% - 84% for householder, and 55% - 68% for non-householder) have continued to be newer casework items that have been determined substantially faster than overall average time measure.



A significant volume of 'legacy' items which are older than 12 months from validation remains and it is anticipated that resolution of these items will continue to impact adversely upon average time performance measures for 2024/25 and into 2025/26. It is acknowledged that the timeliness of determining applications requires further improvement. The Development Management Service Plan for 2024-2026 sets out the aim to return performance on timeliness for determining applications to within 10% of the national benchmark.

Approval Rates

The Development Management Service continues to process all planning applications with the aspiration of delivering positive outcomes. It is however recognised that this approach coupled with the challenging circumstances under which the service has been operating has significantly impacted on the timeliness of determination and contributed toward the accumulation of a sizeable backlog of statutory casework. Recent efforts to determine problematic 'legacy' items has resulted in a higher proportion of refusals.

Approval Rates			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Decisions Approved	98.0%	99.5%	96.4%
Decisions Refused	2.0%	0.5%	3.6%

Processing Agreements / Extension of Time

[Processing Agreements](#) continue to be promoted as a tool to assist in the handling of Major Applications and complex local applications however there appears to be limited appetite from customers to proactively seek a formal processing agreement in advance of submission.

Extensions of time preserve applicant's right of appeal have long been utilised as a tool to manage expectations but until recently have not been formally recorded for performance reporting purposes and it is recognised that this has been to the detriment of the Council's performance as reported by the Scottish Government where there has been a growing trend in recent years amongst other local authorities to utilise time extensions for performance reporting purposes. The introduction of revised time extension processes and procedures which include recording of this activity for performance reporting during 2024/25 will result in ABC including time extensions within its statutory returns in future. The revised time extension process encourages officers to be more proactive in their management of complex/long running casework with a view to bringing this to a timely conclusion and managing the expectations of the applicant and other stakeholders.

Handling of Third Party Representations

The Council’s long-established working practice has been to allow the submission of late representations from interested third parties right up until an application is determined. Established processes allow for the efficient and effective management of representations even where these involve a high volume of submissions. It has however been identified that the late representations can be submitted tactically to impact adversely upon the timing of an application being determined by raising new issues at a late stage in proceedings and this has been found to be particularly disruptive in relation to items being considered by the PPSL Committee. The DM Service Plan identifies a commitment to review existing procedures for the handling, publication and reporting of third party representations with the aim of reducing potential disruption to the determination of applications whilst retaining an effective means for interested parties to engage in the planning process.

Post-determination Discharge of Planning Conditions

The Development Management Service does not currently have any electronic workflow in place for the handling and determination of post-determination submissions requesting the discharge of planning conditions. It has been identified that this has resulted in inconsistency in the level of service provided to customers and in the way in which different officers formally record the discharge of planning conditions. The Development Management Service Plan has identified an improvement action for the review and updating of existing procedures and development of electronic workflow to improve performance in this area. The updated procedure is currently in active development and will be rolled out in early 2025-26 to accompany the introduction of a charge for this service. New procedures will be accompanied by a review of model planning conditions.

S75 / Planning Legal Agreements

The progression of applications requiring planning legal agreements are monitored as part of regular casework review undertaken by team leaders to monitor progression. Whilst our performance is generally better than the national average it has been identified that there may be opportunities to improve the efficiency of working practices in the sharing of information between the Development Management and Legal Services following the roll out of MS Teams corporately and this will be explored further during 2025/26.

Applications Requiring a Planning Legal Agreement			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
No. of Applications	14	5	7
Average Time	33.6 weeks	49.9 weeks	26.7 weeks

Local Review and Appeals

A very small number of applications are subject to Local Review Body (LRB) / Appeal and are a good indicator that the Council has an up to date and effective Development Plan. Outcomes of appeals and LRBs and Appeals are circulated to officers; any key issues in relation to the handling of the case are reviewed with the case officer. The outcome of Appeals are also reported back to the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing (PPSL) Committee to provide feedback to elected Members on the key issues addressed by the DPEA Reporter.

Outcome of LRB / Appeal			
	2023/24 No. / (% Original Decision Upheld)	2022/23 No. / (% Original Decision Upheld)	2021/22 No. / (% Original Decision Upheld)
Local Reviews	5 (60.0%)	2 (100%)	6 (33.3%)
Appeals to Scottish Government (DPEA)	2 (50.0%)	2 (0%)	5 (20.0%)

Enforcement Charter / Cases

The [Planning Enforcement & Monitoring Charter](#) was reviewed and updated by the Council in September 2024. Planning enforcement is delivered by three dedicated enforcement officers who each work within a specific geographic area of Argyll and Bute. A recent review of the enforcement function has however identified a requirement to review enforcement workflow procedures to improve the efficiency and consistency of service delivery and use of back office systems utilised for performance reporting which would indicate that the volume of activity is being under reported at present.

Detail	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Enforcement Complaints Received	197	184	228
Cases Taken Up	59	79	82
Number of Breaches Resolved	66	92	80
Notices Served	26	18	18

Improvement Action Plan (Tools theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
6. The planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base	2
7. The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	3
8. The planning authority has effective and efficient decision making processes	3

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS RELATED TO TOOLS THEME						
Improvement Action No.	Improvement Action	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short Term: <1 year Medium Term: 1-3 years Long Term:>3 years	Resources	NPIF Attribute(s)
8.	Develop and Pilot Place Based Board to deliver coordinated cross service and public sector improvements	Corporate	Medium	Short	Council Services and Community Planning Partners	4 – Sound Governance 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes

9.	Develop spatial analysis and monitoring of short term let licensing to inform potential development of Planning Control Areas	Development Policy / GIS / Regulatory Services	High	Short	Internal	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base 7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes
10.	Better integration of backoffice DM Systems for casework / workflow / document management, and enhancement of Public Access functionality <i>See related DM Improvement Plan Actions 2:07, 2:09, 2:12 & 2:17</i>	Development Management	High	Medium-Term	Service / ABC IT / External software providers.	7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes
11.	Review handling of Third Party Late Representations.	Development Management	Medium	Medium Term	Service Development / ABC Governance	8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes

	<i>See related DM Improvement Plan Action 2:14</i>					
12.	<p>Process for Post-Determination Discharge of Planning Conditions and Review of Model Conditions</p> <p><i>See related DM Improvement Actions Plan 2:15 & 2:16</i></p>	Development Management	Short	Short Term	Service Development	<p>7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>
13.	<p>Planning Enforcement Workflow, Procedures & Performance Reporting</p> <p><i>See related DM Improvement Plan Actions: 2:04 & 2:06</i></p>	Development Management	Medium	Short Term	Service Development	<p>7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>
14.	Improve LDP data management capacity to adequately and	Development Policy Team / IT	High	Medium	To be identified through IT	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base

	timeously manage LDP process				Strategic Planning	7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes
15.	Improve tailored engagement with young people, piloting this in two areas Helensburgh & Oban as part of Strategic Development Plan Framework delivery	Development Policy	High	Short term	Consultants have been engaged to deliver this.	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base 10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders
16.	Improve understanding of Housing Market Needs and Demands	Housing Service	High	Medium	Consultants have been engaged to deliver this.	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base 10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders
18.	Employ dedicated housing delivery officers to coordinate cross service facilitation of development	Corporate	High	Short	Corporate	1 - Resources & Skills 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes

						<p>9 – Good Customer Care</p> <p>12 - Supporting Delivery of Development</p>
24.	Explore the development of a shared workspace for progression of S75/Planning Legal Agreements	Development Management / Legal Services	Low	Short	Corporate	<p>7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>
25.	Development of Service / Team / Individual Performance Dashboards utilising capabilities MS Power BI to improve performance reporting and management	Development Management / IT Service	Medium	Medium	Corporate	<p>3 – Embedded Continuous Improvement</p> <p>7 – Making Best Use of Data & Digital Technology</p> <p>8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes</p>



A high performing planning authority should ensure a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places. Engagement should be fair and inclusive, early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate and should include difficult to reach groups. The authority should engage with a wide range of partners at a national, regional and local level to ensure a joined-up approach and that links are made across policies and programmes. The planning authority should demonstrate good customer care, transparency and effective communication.

ATTRIBUTE 9: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS GOOD CUSTOMER CARE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have the ability to offer pre-application advice where it is requested?
- Has the planning authority held regular engagement events with developers and communities?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that customers are satisfied with the service offer by the planning authority?

Narrative

DM Customer Charter

The [Development Management Customer Charter](#) provides an easy to access overview of the planning application process and sets out expectations for the standard of service and timeliness. The Charter provides a guide for both customers and officers about how the planning application process will be delivered and the standard of service expected to be provided by officers.

Planning Guidance

The Council has published information on a variety of topics online that is intended to assist applicants and developers to identify the requirement for planning permission and the preparation of their application. Where customers are unable to self-serve or require bespoke advice then they are directed to utilise the chargeable pre-application enquiry service.

The Council offers a pre-application advice service which allows developers and applicants the opportunity to obtain advice from a Council planning officer in advance of submitting their

application. The pre-application service is intended to inform an applicant’s expectations of success and the content of their application to reduce delays and streamline the planning process.

Pre-Application Enquiry Service

The uptake of the pre-application enquiry service has been very good and with the volume of enquiries being representative of approximately 50% of statutory determinations on average.

Pre-Application Enquiry Service			
	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Number of pre-applications enquiries received (% of the volume of statutory determinations within the same period)	520 (44.5%)	570 (54.7 %)	582 (48.1 %)

A lack of capacity within the Development Management Service to accommodate demand from both statutory and non-statutory casework in recent years however seen the timeliness of the pre-application enquiry service diminish along with increased customer dis-satisfaction. This is evidenced within increased complaints relating to the use of the pre-application service, customer feedback, and a reduction in the number of enquiries and non-statutory fee income. The Council has committed to undertaking a review and improvement of its pre-application process.

Developer / Community Engagement

Following the declaration of a Housing Emergency, the Council organised a Housing Summit to engage with all key stakeholders of the Housing System. This Council engaged independent consultants to facilitate this process and a face to face day long summit was arranged in Oban. Over 90 delegates attended, including housebuilders, contractors, RSLs, Scottish Government representatives, Shelter, key agencies, politicians, Community Housing Trusts and land owners. The event included facilitated workshops to identify and prioritise key problems and issues which need to be tackled and will have the maximum effect. A detailed report of the Housing Summit was produced and circulated to all attendees, and directly building on these outcomes, a Housing Emergency Action Programme was developed. Ultimately, this was incorporated into the Council’s Local Housing Strategy Annual Update.

The service has provided training to Community Council Planning representatives to improve their understanding of the planning system and how to engage with development management

and local development plan processes. This was delivered through online training events held in March 2023.

Customer User Forum

The Planning Service hosted a User Forum in October 2024 for regular customers including architects, agents and developers. The forum provided an opportunity to report on the performance of the service, the key challenges that had been faced and the actions taken to address these issues. Feedback from stakeholders was generally positive and recognised that significant improvement was being made with the delivery of LDP2 in Feb 2024 and in performance in the timeliness of determining applications and communications. Prior to the pandemic, the User Forum was an annual event and this will be the case once more moving forward.

Planning Service Status Webpage

The [Planning Service Status Webpage](#) is utilised as bulletin board for customers. The webpage is regularly updated with information on performance to inform expectations on the turn-around times for applications and pre-application enquiries, to identify any other issues that may be impacting upon service delivery / functionality, and to highlight any upcoming changes to legislation, fees, or our own internal procedures that customers may need to be aware of.

ATTRIBUTE 10: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have a community engagement strategy and infrastructure in place to ensure engagement is early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate?
- Has the planning authority undertaken community engagement, for example consistent and effective use of the Place Standard Tool, to inform decision-making processes?
- Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?
- Has the planning authority engaged with a good representation of the community including young people, gypsies and travellers, people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds?
- Has the planning authority supported the production of Local Place Plans when requested?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that stakeholders are satisfied with their collaboration with the planning authority?

Narrative

Communication Strategy

The Council has produced a Communication Strategy “Together for Argyll and Bute”. [Argyll and Bute Communication Strategy](#)

This strategy has been developed to support:

- The council’s vision for a successful, vibrant Argyll and Bute with a growing population and a thriving economy; a place where people want to come to live, to work and to do business.
- Connect for Success – the council’s drive to develop culture that enables business success.
- Local ambition – employees’ commitment to doing a good job in difficult circumstances, and communities’ aspiration for success for Argyll and Bute.
- The increasing importance, in day-to-day practices and in national reform proposals, of agencies, councils and communities working together.

The principles that underlie the strategy are as follows:

- Our communication will be open, accurate and accessible, to provide information that can be trusted amidst the risk of miss/ disinformation elsewhere.
- We will provide information and opportunities for those with a contribution to make to, to work with us for Argyll and Bute's success.
- Communication activity is based on audience insight, and evaluated so that we do what works. We will adapt communication practices to resources and opportunities.
- We will make support available in communicating effectively.
- We will deliver communication services that support communities affected by, and council services responding to, area emergencies Digital First.
- In support of customer preferences, and delivering best value, we will take opportunities from digital innovations to develop and improve communication practices.
- Our communication services will support the objectives of the council and also the aims shared with partners for the area

How good is your place? Area wide engagement results using the Place Standard Tool

The Council along with the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has used [the Place Standard tool](#) to engage residents in Argyll and Bute on how they feel about the place(s) that they live and work in in Argyll and Bute. A substantive 1,558 responses were received. The thematic areas of Natural Space, Feeling Safe, Identity and Sense of Belonging and Social Contact came out with the highest scores, needing the least improvement, when considering Argyll and Bute as a whole. The information provided was used to develop the refresh of the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan and will be integral to the development of LDP3 and the shaping of area Plans.

The results of the engagement can be accessed here: [Place Based Community Assessments](#) They are grouped under the four administrative areas and include assessments for over 60 local places. The results are available for community groups and partner agencies to use, for example, to assist with service planning or for community-led action plans.

LDP3 Development Plan Scheme sets out our participation statement in full. ([LDP3 DPS](#))

Community and stakeholder engagement is important in the planning process. It influenced the current policies and proposals in LDP2 and will influence the forthcoming plans and policies in LDP3. At key stages we will engage with:

- Stakeholders / key agencies in the public sector
- Neighbouring local authorities and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park
- Statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations
- Landowners, developers and others with business interests

- The local community including residents and their representatives; Community Councils, Community Development Trusts and other community organisations; and other interested bodies

We will use a variety of engagement techniques detailed in the list below. This includes information dissemination at each stage as well as full consultation, involvement and collaboration at key stages 2 and 4. We want to continue a discussion with all sectors of the community across Argyll and Bute but are particularly keen to secure the views and opinions of young people and families with children, as well as people in full time employment. These groups have been under-represented in the past and their involvement could help us look at new ways to achieve population retention and growth.

In order to reach all sectors, information will be clear, accessible and in plain English where possible. We will:

- Provide information and consultation documents through our website, promoted by social media
- Provide updates at key stages to those on our LDP3 contacts database, which will comprise anyone who requests to be added to receive updates, or who responds to consultations
- Provide information through Community Councils, Council offices and local libraries
- Place adverts in local newspapers and promote the LDP3 process with the media
- Engage with the public and community at meetings and events
- Provide online mapping of the proposed LDP3
- Engage with Councillors and Government agencies through Briefing meetings
- Answer questions by email or telephone
- Provide consultation updates via website and/or social media
- Share information through social media
- Provide for formal comments to be submitted online
- Carry out Neighbour Notifications
- Work with the Community Planning Partnership
- Engage with young people through our Education partners
- Adopt the use of online polling platforms

In line with Circular 2/2021 mediation may be used as a voluntary process to resolve issues of dispute between stakeholders.

Stages of Engagement

Stage 1: Early Preparation Purpose (DPS): To give the public an opportunity to provide views on how the Council engages with them in the preparation of the Plan Purpose (LPP's): To involve communities in the preparation of the Plan by empowering them to prepare Local Place Plans

Stage 2: Evidence Report Purpose: To alert people to the start of the LDP3 preparation and involve communities to gather information for the Evidence Report.

Stage 3: Gate Check No consultation at this stage (Information and Publicity only)

Stage 4: Proposed Plan Preparation Purpose (Early Engagement): To provide an opportunity for people to put forward ideas to build a shared dialogue to shape the Plan's content. Purpose (Consultation): To allow people to make formal representations on the content of the Proposed Plan.

Stage 5: Examination No consultation at this stage (Information and Publicity only)

Stage 6: Adoption No consultation at this stage (Information and Publicity only)

Stage 7: Monitoring and Delivery No consultation at this stage

Local Place Plans

The Council has agreed a protocol for the provision of support for Community Council's wishing to produce Local Place Plans. To date 12 community Councils have expressed an interest in producing Local Place Plans. The Council has run a number of training events for Community Councils specifically tailored to address Local Place Plan production. Dedicated webpages have been produced with a variety of information and guidance available. Officers from relevant teams of the Council have begun to meet bi-weekly to coordinate support efforts. To date one Local Place Plan has been validated and registered. A feedback survey has been included as part of the validation process but to date, with only one submission, there is insufficient data to draw any conclusions.

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

The planning authority works in close partnership with the Council's Housing Service. We are currently preparing the design of the household survey which will underpin the replacement Housing Needs and Demand Assessment. It is intended this will be complete for spring 2026. The survey will include engagement with a substantial representation of the community including young people, gypsies and travellers, people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds?

e-Planning Portal

The Council [website](#) provides assistance to prospective applicants in the preparation of their submission and promotes use of the national e-Planning Portal.

Customer Service Strategy

As part of its ongoing focus on customer service Argyll and Bute Council has had a Customer Service Strategy and Charter since 2010, which is regularly reviewed following extensive customer surveys. [The Charter](#) tells customers the standards of response and behaviours customers can expect from council employees depending on how they contact us and what we need customers to do to help us provide them with good services. The Current Charter and [Strategy, and Strategy Action Plan](#) of upcoming customer service improvements were reviewed in 2024. The council constantly checks its performance against key customer service metrics such as [customer satisfaction](#), quality and timeliness and publishes a range [performance reports](#), that are also considered by elected Members at Area Committees and the [Audit and Scrutiny Committee](#). Important reports include the Council's [Annual Performance Report](#) and the [Annual Complaints Report](#). We also benchmark our service delivery performance against other councils as part of the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework](#) and use feedback from all these sources to drive continual improvement such that detailed in our [Output Improvement Plan](#) and ICT and Digital Strategy.

Customer User Forum

The Planning Service held a user forum event in October 2024 aimed at developers and agents. The hybrid event was well attended by regular customers and included a particular focus on the implementation of LDP2 following its adoption earlier in the year, the performance of the Development Management Service, and an update on the progression of planned service improvements and future commitments.

Customer Charter

The Development Management Service has published its own [Customer Charter](#) which sets out the service standards that customers can expect, and provides information on how performance will be monitored and reported.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Planning Service has ongoing and regular informal engagement with a range of key stakeholders, including but not limited to SEPA, Forestry Land Scotland, Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, the Energy Consents Unit, Scottish Salmon, Scottish Government More Homes Division, Highland and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Futures Trust amongst others.

Improvement Action Plan (Engage theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
9. This planning authority has good customer care	3
10. The planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities.	2

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS RELATED TO ENGAGE THEME						
Improvement Action No.	Improvement Action	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short Term: <1 year Medium Term: 1-3 years Long Term:>3 years	Resources	NPIF Attribute(s)
7.	Improved Customer Satisfaction Survey – to include wider range of stakeholders and improved level of feedback. <i>Linked to DM Service Plan Objective 3.</i>	Development Management	Medium	Short-term	Service Development:	5 – Effective Leadership 10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders

15.	Improve tailored engagement with young people, piloting this in two areas Helensburgh & Oban as part of Strategic Development Plan Framework delivery	Development Policy	High	Short term	Consultants have been engaged to deliver this.	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base 10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders
16.	Improve understanding of Housing Market Needs and Demands	Housing Service	High	Medium	Consultants have been engaged to deliver this.	6 – Robust Policy & Evidence Base 10 – Effective Engagement & Collaboration with Stakeholders
17.	Pre-application Enquiry Service: Review and upgrade of existing pre-application enquiry service and self-service publications. <i>See DM Improvement Plan Action 2:02</i>	Development Management	High	Medium	Service Development	9 – Good Customer Care

18.	Employ dedicated housing delivery officers to coordinate cross service facilitation of development	Corporate	High	Short	Corporate	1 - Resources & Skills 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes 9 – Good Customer Care 12 - Supporting Delivery of Development
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A high performing planning authority should demonstrate place leadership by taking a collaborative place-based approach in line with the Place Principle. It should use the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes in decision-making processes, to achieve the three spatial principles outlined in NPF4: Sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; Liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and Productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The planning authority should seek to ensure that there are no impediments to delivering agreed development.

ATTRIBUTE 11: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF SUSTAINABLE, LIVEABLE AND PRODUCTIVE PLACES

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Is the planning authority aware of the [Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#), the evidence that sits behind them and is it using them in decision-making processes?
- Has the planning authority identified tools and approaches to delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places and is implementing them?

Narrative

Supporting Sustainable, Liveable and Productive Places

Climate friendly Argyll and Bute

The Council is taking action in different ways, across all its services, to improve Place and create a climate-friendly Argyll and Bute, so that we support the planet and the resources on which we all depend to live.

Action, investment and commitment

- Argyll and Bute Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 32.8% since reporting commenced in 2015/16.
- We are [investing more than £1.2 million](#) in action to save energy and deliver progress in becoming a net zero carbon emissions organisation by 2045.

- We have signed up to the national Household Recycling Charter
- We develop local actions to support national initiatives
- We promote becoming climate-friendly Argyll and Bute
- Our local development plan sets out how the council will deliver sustainable development
- We are developing walking and cycling routes
- Our young people are getting involved and playing their part, for example:
- schools and nurseries across Argyll and Bute (both council and other providers) are registered with eco-schools and a number have green flag status
- Rhu pupils fight climate change
- Our sustainable development page provides more examples of action we are taking. Our **Decarbonisation Plan** sets out actions we are working to deliver for climate friendly Argyll and Bute. Our approach is based on addressing six overall themes:
 - Waste
 - Energy and Water Consumption
 - Transport emissions from our commercial fleet like buses, bin lorries, vans and cars.
 - Preparing and adapting for impacts of climate change
 - Offsetting our emissions through partnership and innovation
 - Telling people about it and encouraging the community to do their bit
#climatefriendlyABC

It will take everyone who cares about Argyll and Bute to build a great future for Argyll and Bute so we share this vision with our Community Planning Partners. We are committed to taking a sustainable approach to deliver our vision and key objectives.

Promoting and Delivery of Sustainable Development

The Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out how the council will facilitate sustainable development. It is designed to protect our built and natural environment whilst facilitating development that supports our communities and businesses. In addition, the following policy documents help to guide and monitor sustainable development:

- Biodiversity Duty Reports and Action Plan ;
- Historic Environment Strategy;
- Marine plans;
- Woodland and Forestry Strategy;
- Local Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Other work carried out by the Council which helps to support a sustainable place and wellbeing future for Argyll includes:

- Delivery of the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland : Area Based Scheme (HEEPS: ABS) grant programme for home owners
- Maximising the benefits of renewable energy developments planned for Argyll;
- Environmental protection and public health work undertaken by our Environmental Health team;
- Kerbside and community recycling;
- Support to communities and social enterprises who want to undertake their own projects to make their communities more sustainable;
- Support for businesses through Business Gateway;
- Supported public transport services;
- Developing walking and cycling routes;
- Flood risk management;
- Support to Live Argyll who deliver sports and leisure facilities to communities across Argyll and Bute; and
- Support to the Argyll and the Isles Coast and Countryside Trust who are currently working on a peatland restoration project.

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)

In November 2024 following an intensive process of engagement and consultation, the Council approved a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy: [Argyll & Bute LHEES](#).

The LHEES addresses key priorities, including improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling fuel poverty and its delivery will be important in driving forward Place and Wellbeing improvements. Additionally, it aims to advocate for a “just transition” to low or no carbon heating for residential and non-residential buildings while examining the opportunities for community wealth building presented by the net-zero agenda.

The LHEES has been developed through an engagement process with key stakeholders. This included delivering two stakeholder events to determine priorities, and further sessions were held with Argyll and Bute Energy Efficiency Forum and Climate Change Board. Engagement with electricity network distributors, such as Scottish and Southern Energy Networks and Scottish Power Energy Networks, was also undertaken. Public consultation on the LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plan ran from the 26th of September to the 13th of October, 2024.

Community Food Growing

The Argyll and Bute [Community Food Growing Strategy](#) explains how we support current community growing provision and how we will respond to future demand and support new approaches such as community lead growing space establishment.

The Argyll and Bute Council Community Food Growing Strategy provides an insight into what allotment and community growing provision already exists within our area. This was informed by a stakeholder engagement survey, the results of which have enabled us to capture the current status, management arrangements and interest of the community in growing their own food.

In order to address the objectives of the strategy we will encourage and empower communities to establish their community growing spaces/gardens by providing information to community groups. These groups will independently manage their respective growing spaces addressing all day-to-day issues relating to plot holders.

The strategy outlines an approach that should deliver best value for Argyll and Bute Council Area and all community groups that have an interest in growing their own.

Vision – Our vision is to encourage and enable people in our community who wish to grow their own food, by providing: information on potential community food growing spaces, advice and guidance.

Procurement Strategy

The council published a Sustainable Procurement Strategy for 2022/2025 and is currently refreshing this to extend it to 2028. This sets out a framework which enables the council to continue on its journey of change and innovation through:

- Securing wider social, economic and environmental benefits for the local area and ensuring those benefits are realised.
- Increasing opportunities for local suppliers to help grow the local economy.
- Increasing engagement and collaboration with suppliers.
- Developing resilient local supply chains, providing clear advice and consistent approaches to procurement and community benefits, ensuring businesses are aware of, and are able to take advantage of, procurement opportunities supported by a programme of active and innovative supplier engagement and development support.
- Increasing the knowledge and understanding of the benefits of sustainable procurement.

Place Wellbeing Outcomes, Evidence and Decision Making

Place and Well Being Outcomes are embedded in the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan, and all the documents that seek to support that.

The main aim of the Community Planning Partnership is to deliver the outcomes within the Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan (ABOIP). The new ABOIP was published in February 2024 following an extensive consultation with individuals and community planning partners. Almost 2,000 residents took part in our 'Improving Lives in Argyll and Bute' survey and analysis of the results has identified the outcomes of **Transport Infrastructure**, **Housing** and **Community Wellbeing** as the most important to people in the area. These will be delivered as follows:

Outcome 1: Transport Infrastructure; Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership will improve transport infrastructure by:

- Working with partners and communities to create a reliable, accessible, affordable and integrated public transport system for Argyll and Bute.
- Working with partners and communities to ensure a resilient, well-maintained and safe road and active travel network across Argyll and Bute.
- Working with partners to enhance provision of bespoke transport services for those experiencing the greatest inequality in ease of movement.
- Contributing to local and national strategic transport plans to ensure the needs of communities experiencing inequalities in transport infrastructure are acknowledged and addressed.
- Co-producing partners' plans for elements relating specifically to tackling inequalities in transport infrastructure.

Outcome 2: Housing; Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership will improve housing by:

- Working in effective partnerships to ensure that everyone living and working in Argyll and Bute has access to affordable, warm homes of the right size, in the right place with access to the services, amenities and economic opportunities that communities need to thrive.
- Ensuring that plans and policies are informed by communities' needs and aspirations, especially those facing the greatest inequalities in housing related outcomes.
- Working with partners and communities to ensure that everyone has the ability to have a say in shaping what housing looks like for their place.
- Reviewing partners' land and property assets to ensure resources are used effectively to support the provision of housing for key workers and others.
- Working together to identify opportunities for the prevention of homelessness through early intervention.

Outcome 3: Community Wellbeing Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership will improve Community Wellbeing by:

- Broadening equality of access to Community Leadership opportunities.
- Furthering equality of access to services, facilities and community assets.
- Working with partners to maximise sustainability of community facilities and services.
- Enabling a voice in collective decision making.
- Enhancing communication within communities.
- Better understanding how communities achieve a sense of connection and belonging.

Health and Social Care Partnership

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership has produced a Strategic Plan: **Argyll and Bute HSCP Joint Strategic Plan**

In Argyll and Bute, the HSCP delivers and purchases a broad range of services covering all aspects of health and social care. Included in the remit of the HSCP are: • NHS services ; Community hospitals; Acute Care; Primary Care (including GPs); Allied Health Professionals, Community Health Services, Maternity Services • Public Health services including the Prevention agenda • Adult social care services including services for older adults; people with learning disabilities; and people with mental health problems • Children & Families social care services • Alcohol and Drug Services • Gender Based Violence • Child and Adult Protection • Criminal and Community Justice Services. In bringing together all these services within one partnership and one strategy we aim for services to work closer together so that people receive the right level of care at the right time from our workforce of professional staff and can move through services easily. We need to ensure that we plan services strategically from the population and local data evidence, and what people and our workforce tell us. We need a range of services from prevention programmes to critical care. All services are strategically driven by local and national place and wellbeing priorities.

Tools and Approaches to Delivery

The Council has launched a [Community-led Action Planning toolkit – available here](#). With templates, fact sheets, useful links and resources, we have developed a toolkit to help community groups improve the places they live with an Action Plan.

In spring 2025, Argyll and Bute Council will launch '**Aspiring Places – Community Projects in Argyll and Bute**'. This is a new initiative to help raise awareness of the range of projects, community groups and organisations are planning or would like to carry out.

The council aims to collect information about aspirational community projects across Argyll and Bute in one digital space. The purpose of the initiative is to support community groups in attracting funding for their projects.

ATTRIBUTE 12: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF CONSENTED DEVELOPMENT

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority provided clear and proportionate expectations of Section 75 agreements and set these out in the LDP and pre-application discussions and they are concluded within 6 months of resolution to grant?
- Does the planning authority take a proportionate approach to imposing conditions?
- Does the planning authority have an ambitious local housing land requirement that exceeds the Minimum All Tenure Housing land requirements in NPF4 and is it on track to support delivery?
- Are the number of processing agreements the planning authority has agreed with applicants increasing?
- Does the planning authority have an effective delivery programme in place that supports the delivery of development on the ground?

Narrative

Section 75 / Planning Legal Agreements

Given the low volume and dispersed nature of development activity across Argyll and Bute there are only limited circumstances where, the Council will expect developer contributions from development proposals. These are generally where there is a stated requirement for affordable housing as set out in the LDP2 or where there may be specific requirements for other off-site improvements/works proportional to and directly related to the development that are necessary to allow it to proceed. This may also include contributions for the provision of additional housing required for new employees associated with significant industrial or commercial developments particularly in remote communities where housing is at a premium. In exceptional cases there may be assistance available from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund where there may be extraordinary infrastructure or development costs associated with such development and a robust economic case has been made for supporting the housing need that can help sustain these businesses into the future. A balanced and measured approach to developer contributions is therefore required and this is the basis of the criteria set out in the policy 48 of LDP2.

Planning Conditions

Planning conditions are utilised where it is necessary, reasonable and proportionate to mitigate the impact of a proposed development and to ensure that any necessary outcomes are delivered. Model conditions are utilised to inform consistency of approach and application. The context and justification for the imposition of planning conditions is identified within the related report of handling, and where the effect of a condition would give rise to significant resource implications or limitations upon the use of a development these will be discussed with the applicant where practicable.

Local Housing Land Requirement

The MATHLR for Argyll and Bute as set out within NPF4 is 2150 units and this has been translated within LDP2 into a LHLR of 3000 homes for a 10 year period commencing from 2020. The total number of completions between 1/4/2020 and 31/3/2023 is 869 units. Taking into account completions since 2020 the total remaining number of units from the MATHLR is 1281 and from the LHLR is 2131. The 869 completions over the past 3 years represents 40% of the MATHLR and 29% of the LHLR.

Processing Agreements / Extension of Time

[Processing Agreements](#) continue to be promoted as a tool to assist in the handling of Major Applications and complex local applications however there appears to be limited appetite from customers to proactively seek a formal processing agreement in advance of submission.

The introduction of revised time extension processes and procedures which include recording of this activity for performance reporting during 2024/25 will result in an increase in the formal use of time extensions in the future and are expected to provide applicants with greater certainty on the expected timeline for the consenting process.

LDP Delivery Programme

The LDP2 [Delivery Programme](#) adopted in September 2024 sets out how the Planning Authority proposes to implement LDP2.

Improvement Action Plan (Place theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
11. The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	2
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	2

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS RELATED TO PLACE THEME						
Improvement Action No.	Improvement Action	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short Term: <1 year Medium Term: 1-3 years Long Term:>3 years	Resources	NPIF Attribute(s)
18.	Employ dedicated housing delivery officers to coordinate cross service facilitation of development	Corporate	High	Short	Corporate	1 - Resources & Skills 8 – Efficient & Effective Decision Making Processes 9 – Good Customer Care

						12 - Supporting Delivery of Development
19.	Deliver pilot worker housing on an Island	Planning/Housing/Regeneration	High	Medium	Rural Growth Deal & Strategic Housing Fund, Partnership Funding	11 – Sustainable, Liveable & Productive Places 12 - Supporting Delivery of Development
20.	Deliver Market Housing for Primary Occupancy on an Island	Planning/Housing/Regeneration	High	Long	Rural Growth Deal & Strategic Housing Fund, Partnership Funding	11 – Sustainable, Liveable & Productive Places 12 - Supporting Delivery of Development
21.	Review Local Nature Conservation Sites	Development Policy	Medium	Short	Nature Restoration Fund	11 – Sustainable, Liveable & Productive Places
22.	Refresh Local Biodiversity Action Plan	Development Policy	Medium	Short	Nature Restoration Fund	11 – Sustainable, Liveable & Productive Places
23.	Develop Community Woodland in Dunbeg	Planning	Medium	Medium	Nature Restoration Fund / ACT / Community Council	11 – Sustainable, Liveable & Productive Places

