

Planning Committee

10.00am, Monday, 15 June 2015

Planning Performance Framework 2014-15

Planning and Building Standards Service Plan

Item number	6.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2014-15 for its submission to the Scottish Government. This year, the Service Plan for 2015-16 is embedded into the Planning Performance Framework as are the outcomes from the 2014-15 Service Plan.

The Service Plan for 2014-15 set a number of targets which proved to be difficult to achieve in the context of rising application numbers and a service undergoing structural change. Now that the new service structure is in place, a number of service improvements are put forward for the year ahead.

There have been a number of successes in the past year notably awards for the Edinburgh Design Guidance which showed our commitment to improving design standards; our performance on major developments and our significant role in delivering inward investment to the City with projects such as the St James Quarter; the 100 Years of Planning exhibition which showed how important Planning is in a rapidly changing City; and our strong approach to partnership working to help deliver Council strategic outcomes in a thriving successful City.

Links

Coalition pledges	P15, P27, P28, P40
Council outcomes	CO7, CO19, CO24, CO25, CO26, CO27
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1, SO4

Planning Performance Framework 2014-15

Planning and Buildings Standards Service Plan

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a. Approves the Planning Performance Framework 2014-15 for submission to the Scottish Government;
 - b. Notes the progress made in delivery of service improvements in 2014-15; and
 - c. Approves the Planning and Building Standards Service Plan for 2015-16.

Background

- 2.1 The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) is a document that is submitted every year to the Scottish Government detailing how the planning authority has delivered its service over the previous year and how it has embedded a culture of continuous improvement. Whilst the speed of decision-making is an important factor, the outputs of our projects and service improvements are a major focus of the framework.
- 2.2 The Service Plan for Planning and Building Standards sets out improvements will be delivered in pursuit of a more effective and efficient service. The proposed Service Plan 2015-16 includes key indicators by which service improvements will be assessed. This year, the Service Plan has been embedded into the PPF as the date for the submission of this to the Scottish Government has been brought forward to 31 July 2015.
- 2.3 The Service Plan for 2015-16 focuses on four main headings as drivers for change – Place Making, Customer, Performance and Partnership. These reflect the priorities for the service in the context of the Transformational Change programme of the Council.

Main report

Planning Performance Framework

- 3.1 Appendix 1 is our Planning Performance Framework for 2014-15. The PPF has six main parts:
- National Headline Indicators;
 - Defining and measuring a high quality planning service;
 - Supporting evidence and links to related reports and studies;

- Service improvements and timescales for the delivery of improvements;
- Official statistics; and
- Workforce and financial information.

3.2 Included in the PPF is a copy of the Performance Marker's Report for the previous year (2013-14). This is the Scottish Government's assessment of our performance in relation to 15 key markers. This is scored on a traffic light system which showed the following:

- The Council received green for processing agreements; legal agreements; enforcement charter; corporate working across services; sharing good practice, skills and knowledge; stalled sites/legacy cases; and developer contributions.
- The Council received amber for decision-making timescales; early collaboration with applicants; continuous improvement (Local Development Plan not on course); and regular and proportionate policy advice (supporting information requests should show proportionality).
- The Council received red for the Local Development Plan Scheme as the current two local plans will be 9 years old and 6 years old by the time the Local Development Plan is scheduled to be adopted. This was based on a target adoption date of February 2016 for the Local Development Plan but did not take into account the Edinburgh Rural West Local Plan alteration in 2011.

Overall the feedback from last year's PPF was positive and the ambers have highlighted areas that will be addressed in the proposed service improvements for 2015-16.

3.3 The National Headline Indicators for 2014-15 show the following:

- Whilst the Edinburgh Rural West Local Plan alteration is still less than 5 years old, the Edinburgh City Local Plan became more than 5 years old in the reporting period. The original Edinburgh Rural West Local Plan is just under 9 years old;
- 20 out of the 33 major applications decided this year had processing agreements, with 80% meeting the target committee date;
- 92.6% of applications were approved compared with 91.9% last year and the percentage of delegated cases rose from 93% last year to 94% this year;
- The average number of weeks to make decisions on major planning applications without processing agreements reduced from 27.9 weeks last year to 22.8 weeks this year, for cases post 2009. The figure rose slightly to 26.5 weeks if pre 2009 applications legacy cases were included.

- The average number of weeks to make decisions on local developments (non-householder) increased from 10.6 weeks last year to 11.4 weeks this year (11.6 weeks if pre 2009 applications are included).
- The average number of weeks to make decisions on householder developments increased from 7.5 weeks last year to 7.7 weeks this year;
- 66 legacy cases were removed this year with 203 still remaining; and
- The number of enforcement cases fell from 779 last year to 764 this year.

3.4 Examples of how the PPF defines and measures a high quality planning service in Edinburgh are as follows:

- A focus on delivering our Local Development Plan;
- The supplementary guidance on town centres such as Corstorphine and Tollcross which provide more certainty on uses that may be allowed;
- A role in delivering large scale developments such as the new St James Quarter which contribute to the City's economic growth;
- A strong approach to partnership working such as the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership;
- The revised area-based service structure to enhance management efficiency and our relationship with localities;
- The award winning Edinburgh Design Guidance which seeks to raise the quality of design and place-making;
- A role in delivering 21st Century affordable housing to meet priority housing needs;
- The review of character appraisals to ensure the protection and enhancement of our built heritage;
- A role in working with a range of stakeholders to deliver high quality development such as at 26-31 Charlotte Square;
- The promotion of planning in the City with the 100years of Planning exhibition which has raised awareness of how the City has changed and is changing to remain a successful place;
- The process changes to streamline our working systems and improve productivity and performance;
- The enhancement of our communication channels including the Planning Blog and new web pages to make sure our customers have a good quality service; and
- The commitment to staff training so that as a service we can adapt to new ways of working with customers and partner organisations.

3.5 The official statistics indicate a service having difficulty improving performance on local developments, including householder applications. The number of planning applications received has increased by 5.8% over last year with no additional resource put in place. This is being addressed now through additional recruitment. In addition, through lean reviews of how we process planning applications and other services, we can seek to make systems more efficient. The draft Customer Engagement Strategy also sets out how we can change our customer contact channels to help our customer find information more easily and take some pressure off officers so they can concentrate on their core statutory services.

Service Plan 2014-15 Outcomes

3.6 Last year's service plan focused on 14 service improvements. These are set out fully in the PPF in Appendix 1 under Part 4. There were a number of key achievements in 2014-15:

- The management review was completed and a new service structure was put in place in October 2014 to deliver a locality based, more efficient service structure with tailored training for new managers;
- All the major applications decided showed added value being added by planning officers through design and other improvements. This emphasises our focus on the importance of place-making;
- Performance on listed building consent was consistently above target;
- 92% of site inspections on building warrants are being carried out within 5 working days which is above target;
- Engagement with young people was delivered with projects such as 100 years of Planning exhibition and character appraisal reviews;
- The integration of spatial and community planning was progressed through interaction with Neighbourhood Partnerships on the Local Development Plan; and
- A culture of continuous improvement was embedded by a structured programme of staff training throughout the year.

3.7 However, there were areas where the service improvements were not fully achieved as priorities changed while we progressed the management review of the service. In all cases, these improvements are ongoing and are being addressed in the coming year:

- Whilst good progress has been made developing a new Customer Engagement Strategy this is behind target as the project has expanded to include working with the Council's Transformational Change team;
- The Proposed Local Development Plan did not meet its target Committee date;

- The average time to grant a building warrant has increased rather than reduced due to an increase in casework and the time to issue a completion certificate has not met the target;
- Work on protocols with other service areas was delayed due to the service changes;
- The customer improvement plan following on from the Buildings Standards national customer survey is being progressed as part of the draft Customer Engagement Strategy and a review of verification and admin support processes;
- The review of digital communications is now embedded into the Customer Engagement Strategy;
- Street design and retail strategies have been delayed as discussions continue with stakeholders; and
- A review of design in the planning process is evolving as we progress our place-making project and the implementation of the Place Standard.

Service Plan 2015-16 Proposals

- 3.8 The new service structure in Planning and Building Standards has now been in place for more than six months and the changes have bedded down. The new refreshed service has an ambitious but realistic programme of improvements for the coming year.
- 3.9 Feedback from customers is an important part of the Service Plan process. Civic Forum members, largely made up of community councils, gave us feedback on a survey we asked them to complete about last year's PPF. In addition, as part of the change management programme leading to the service changes, a survey of agents was carried out to get feedback on our service provision. These surveys have given us important information on the type of service improvements we need to make. In addition, many of the comments have assisted in the development of the draft Customer Engagement Strategy.
- 3.10 Additionally, feedback in terms of the Performance Markers Report has led to proposed improvements.
- 3.11 The proposed Service Plan for 2015-16 includes initiatives for the delivery of improvements under four key headings - place-making, customer, performance and partnership. These are as follows:

Place-making Indicators

- Adopt the Proposed LDP by end of March 2016;
- Promote our place-making role to put Planning and Building Standards at the heart of place-making across the City;

Customer Indicators

- Prepare and implement a Customer Engagement strategy and a new Customer Service Charter;
- Refresh and review the Edinburgh Planning Concordat;
- Produce a Building Standards scorecard to show how we have met quarterly performance targets, verifier standards and address key themes as part of the Building Standards National Framework;

Performance Indicators

- 90% of approved major developments within the year to show added value quality improvements;
- 90% of householder applications to be determined in 2 months;
- 75% of non-householder applications to be determined within 2 months;
- 75% of listed building consent applications to be determined within 2 months;
- Seek to minimise the overall average time taken to grant a building warrant measured from the date of lodging to the date of granting the warrant;
- Building Warrant Applications – 90% of first reports to be issued within 20 days;
- Review the implementation of changes to ways of working (as set out in the Manager Assimilation Action Plans) including further training and support to champion corporate values;
- Lean reviews of statutory processes to pinpoint areas for improved service delivery;

Partnership Indicators

- Set out the vision for the Edinburgh City Region via SESPLAN and ensure engagement includes young people;
- Promote our collaborative approach with other service areas by implementing a range of joint working initiatives including new and refreshed working protocols and service level agreements;
- Customer First –E-Building Standards Project delivered in line with Scottish Government milestones.

Measures of success

- 4.1 A PPF that illustrates a culture of continuous improvement with positive feedback from the Scottish Government.

- 4.2 A Service Plan which shows successful outcomes from the previous year and sets out service improvements for the following year that are forward thinking and achievable.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There is no direct financial impact arising from this report.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no perceived risks associated with this report. The report has no impact on any policies of the Council.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment indicates that:
- The proposals will enhance participation, influence and voice as they promote service improvements several of which enhance customer communication and experience;
 - There are no identified positive or negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - The proposals promote the duty to advance equality of opportunity as they promote service improvements which would benefit all, notably the customer engagement strategy and the refreshed Planning Concordat. There are no identified negative impacts;
 - The proposals promote the duty to foster good relations as they make clear what service improvements can be expected and so promote understanding and they explain the positive benefits of the City's planning performance. There are no negative impacts.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impact of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties has been considered, and the outcome is summarised below:
- The proposals in this report do not affect carbon emissions;
 - The need to build resilience to climate change impacts is embedded into planning policy and service improvements, such as joint working protocols with other services, will increase the City's resilience to climate change by enhanced partnership working;

- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they promote service improvements which benefit all aspects of City life;
- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they will assist the economic well being of the City with service improvements; and
- Environmental good stewardship is not considered to impact on the proposals in this report because there is no relevance to the use of natural resources.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 External stakeholder information is gathered from ongoing monitoring of feedback, consultation exercises and engagement on specific projects and is incorporated into the proposed Service Plan. Key stakeholders were also asked, through the Edinburgh Development Forum and the Edinburgh Civic Forum, for their views on last year's Planning Performance Framework which included the service plan. These views were taken into account in the preparation of this year's service plan and the subsequent Planning Performance Framework.
- 9.2 Internal consultation across Planning and Buildings Standards was carried out through the monthly team briefing process. Managers were asked to discuss suggestions for new ways of working with their teams through the monthly team briefing process. This would allow the leadership team to get an overview of the main issues that would drive improvements for 2015-16.
- 9.3 In March, a Planning Committee workshop was held on the PPF and the Service Plan, in order to allow Members to shape the key priorities for the Service Plan. This provided the main priorities and issues that would drive improvements for 2015-16.

Background reading/external references

[Planning Performance Framework 2013-14](#)

[Building Standards Balanced Scorecard 2014-15](#)

[Service Improvement Plan 2014-15](#)

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Links

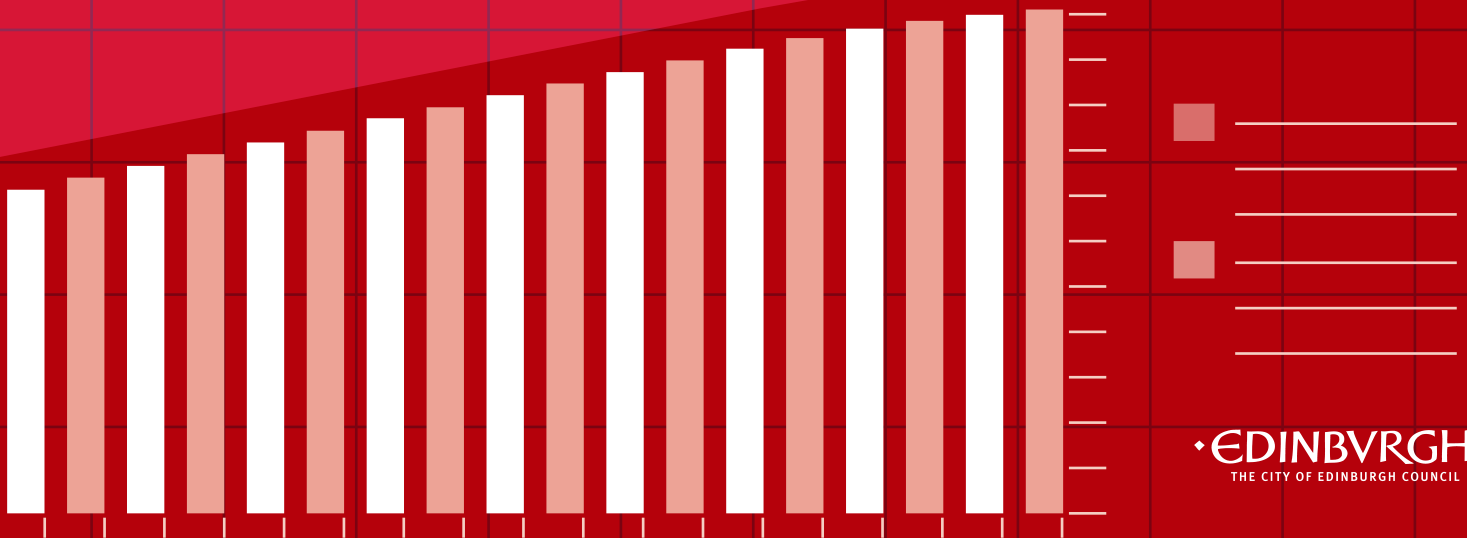
Coalition pledges	<p>P15 Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors</p> <p>P27 - Seek to work in full partnership with Council staff and their representatives</p> <p>P28 - Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic well being of the city</p> <p>P40 – Work with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and other stakeholders to conserve the city’s built heritage</p>
Council outcomes	<p>CO7 – Edinburgh draws new investment in development and regeneration</p> <p>CO19 – Attractive Places and Well Maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards and maintenance of infrastructure and public realm</p> <p>CO24 – The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care</p> <p>CO25 – The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver objectives</p> <p>CO26 – The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver agreed objectives</p> <p>CO27 – The Council supports, invest in and develops our people</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO1 Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all</p> <p>SO4 Edinburgh’s communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric</p>
Appendices	<p>Appendix 1 – Planning Performance Framework 2014-15</p>

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Planning Performance Framework

Services for Communities
Planning

2014 - 2015
2014 - 2015



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Introduction

The City of Edinburgh Council is pleased to submit its fourth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report. The document highlights the work we have done from April 2014 to March 2015 to improve performance and deliver a high quality planning service.

The Planning and Building Standards Service operates in the context of a Council under severe financial pressure and with serious ambitions to create a leaner, more agile council. The *Organise to Deliver* proposals set out a future state for the Council where transformational change will lead to new delivery models for our customers. During 2014-15, the Planning and Building Standards service made significant structural changes and started on a path to create a different, more efficient delivery model where the customer is still our top priority but the focus is on improving online systems to promote a self-serve culture. This will then allow us to concentrate on putting resources into improving performance and productivity.

The *review of our service structure* has meant a difficult year for the Planning and Building Standards Service as resources were re-distributed and transitional arrangements led to a period of change as the new structure was developed. This inevitably affected our ability to improve performance and deliver all the projects we wanted to. However, we were able to perform well on major developments and, despite an increase of 5.8% in the number of planning applications, performance on other application types was generally good, albeit targets were not always met.

The biggest challenge has been to keep the Proposed Local Development Plan (LDP) on course. A new version was necessary because of changes to the Strategic Development Plan for South East Scotland (*SDP*) when that was approved by Scottish Ministers, and by the SDP Supplementary Guidance which followed. The changes meant that the LDP needed to identify more housing land. This requirement has proved difficult in the context of communities concerned about the potential impacts of new development near them.

The new service structure has now bedded down and the focus is on improving performance and delivering the Local Development Plan. In this report, we have shown how we have continued to deliver a high quality planning service and the steps we are taking in 2015-16 to make it even better.

Planning Performance Framework 2013-14

The Council submitted its third Planning Performance Framework to the Scottish Government on 8 August 2014. This covered the period from April 2013 to March 2014. Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights gave us detailed feedback on 11 December 2014.

The following strengths were highlighted in this feedback:

- *You appear to be adopting a positive approach to limiting the use of conditions and we look forward to hearing about your progress in the next report.*
- *We are pleased you have exceeded your target and removed 63% of legacy cases from the system. It would be useful if future reports included the numbers which remain.*
- *You have provided case studies and examples to illustrate your positive approaches to the delivery of economic development and sustaining economic growth.....*
- *We note your proactive approach to place making and are pleased to hear that the Edinburgh Design Guidance.....has been shortlisted for a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning 2014.*
- *You continue to provide quality, accessible web-services with a new design to ensure accessibility for mobile and tablet devices.*

The Performance Markers Report for 2013-14 is set out in Appendix 1 and the red and amber markers identify areas for improvement. These are as follows:

- Average timescales for local and householder developments have increased slightly although both are still better than the national average (amber);
- The report lacks detail of how early collaboration with applicants and consultees ensures that clear and proportionate requests for supporting information are achieved (amber);
- The main concern is that the LDP is not on course for replacement within the 5 year requirement, as it is due to be adopted in February 2016 (amber);
- Development Plan Scheme – local plans will be 9 and 6 years old by the time LDP is adopted in February 2016 (red); and
- Future reports should provide more detail on how policy advice ensures that information required to support applications is proportionate (amber).

This feedback allows us to consider improvements for future years.

Part 1

National Headline Indicators

In “Planning Reform – Next Steps”, one of the key priorities of the Scottish Government is to ensure development plans are up-to-date. Local Development Plans (LDPs) must by law be replaced at least every five years and be consistent with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

The Council is preparing its first *Local Development Plan* (LDP). Following a major consultation stage in 2011-12, the Council published a Proposed Plan in 2013. This received representations from 2,300 individuals and organisations. The issues raised in these representations were considered by the Council when it prepared and approved a Second Proposed Plan on 19 June 2014. A new Development Plan Scheme was circulated in July 2014.

The Second Proposed Plan was made necessary by changes to the Strategic Development Plan for South East Scotland (*SDP*) when that was approved by Scottish Ministers on 27 June 2013, and by the SDP Supplementary Guidance which followed in August 2014. Scottish Ministers took an optimistic view on economic recovery and asked for the housing allocation to be increased in the first period of the plan. This mainly affected Edinburgh where housing demand is focused and the subsequent changes to the LDP changed the spatial strategy. This could not be done by a modification and a whole new plan had to be published. The revision was done as quickly as possible given the requirements of the legislation.

The Second Proposed Plan and its supporting documents were issued online and in hard copy in August 2014. The period for representations ran for six weeks from 22 August to 3 October 2014. Representations were received from around 2,500 individuals and organisations during the period for representations. The Plan missed its target committee date in February 2015 as further assessment was needed on infrastructure costs and funding mechanisms. The Second Proposed Plan was presented to the Planning Committee on 15 May 2015.

In terms of application performance, 20 out of the 33 major applications decided this year had processing agreements with 80% meeting the target committee date. In addition, the average number of weeks to make decisions on major planning applications without processing agreements reduced from 27.9 weeks last year to 22.8 weeks this year for cases post 2009. The figure rose slightly to 26.5 weeks if pre 2009 applications legacy cases were included. These figures show our commitment to ensuring the economic vitality of the City is supported by the planning process.

In terms of local developments, the average number of weeks to make decisions on non-householder applications increased from 10.6 weeks last year to 11.6 weeks this year. In addition, the average number of weeks to make decisions on householder developments increased from 7.5 weeks last year to 7.7 weeks this year. This slight reduction in performance can be accounted for by the increase in the number of planning applications. Recruitment has been put in place for 2015-16 to address concerns about performance.

Key Outcomes	2014-2015	2013-2014
Development Planning:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period 	Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan - 8 years 9 months. Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan alteration - 3 years 9 months. Edinburgh City Local Plan - 5 years 3 months.	Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan - 7 years 9 months. Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan alteration - 2 years 9 months. Edinburgh City Local Plan - 4 years 3 months.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? 	No	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? 	Yes - later	Yes - later
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? 	Yes	Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 	Figures to be provided June 2015	30,865
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year effective housing land supply 		10,048
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year housing supply target 		14,579
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) 		3.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing approvals 		4688
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing completions over the last 5 years 		7741
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketable employment land supply 		183.7 ha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment land take-up during reporting year 	12.6 ha	1.4ha
Development Management		
Project Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice 	36.9%	23.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan 	20	32
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage planned timescales met 	80%	87.5%
Decision-making		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate 	92.6%	91.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegation rate 	94%	93

Decision-making timescales		
Average number of weeks to decision:		
• Major developments (excluding PPAs)	26.5	27.9
• Local developments (non-householder)	11.6	10.6
• Householder developments	7.7	7.5
Legacy Cases		
• Number cleared during reporting period	66	Comparison not available
• Number remaining	203	
Enforcement		
• Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months)	19 months	7 months
• Number of breaches identified / resolved	764	779
Application Numbers		
• Total number of applications received	4413	4172
• Total number of major applications received	56	36

Part 2

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service

Open for Business

positive actions to support sustainable economic growth and social needs.

The Development Plan

The emerging *Proposed Local Development Plan* sets the context for economic development across the city with a number of 'special economic' areas of national or strategic importance to provide the potential for a significant number of jobs. The Plan sets the vision for sustainable economic growth in partnership with all stakeholders. The progression to adoption is a priority for the Council.

As explained in the National Headline Indicators, there has been a delay in the programme for the Local Development Plan. However, it is significant that in August 2014, the strategic development planning authority adopted the *supplementary guidance on housing land* as modified by Scottish Ministers. This will now guide the issue in the Local Development Plan.

In June 2014, a *second Proposed Action Programme* and Development Plan Scheme were approved by the Council alongside its *Second Proposed Local Development Plan*. This action programme sets out those actions needed to deliver the proposals and policies in the Plan. These include infrastructure enhancements which would help ensure that the large levels of development growth in the Plan would have acceptable social and environmental impacts.

In addition, the Council is working closely with the wider *SESplan* team on Strategic Development Plan 2 Main Issues Report. This sets out long-term strategic options for how the region could grow and for the infrastructure needed to do this.

Supplementary guidance on *Gorgie/Dalry Town centre and Corstorphine Town Centre* was approved in its finalised form in August 2014. This guides the balance of uses in each town centre and is used to determine planning applications for the change of use of units in shop use to non-shop uses.

Case study 1 – Supplementary Guidance on Corstorphine Town Centre

The viability and vitality of our town centres are important to the City's economy. Policy Ret8 of the Second Proposed Development Plan requires supplementary guidance (SG) to be prepared for Edinburgh's eight town centres, as well as the city centre retail core. Such guidance is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for the change of use from shop to non-shop uses.

Ensuring that Corstorphine Town Centre has a variety of shops is important in maintaining it as a destination for shopping. However, there are also benefits in allowing shops to change to non-shop uses that complement shop uses and make the best of the town centre's accessible location for the local community. Allowing non-shop uses may also help to address vacancies which have arisen due to the economic downturn and changing behavioural patterns in shopping such as an increase in online shopping.



The guidance ensures that there is more certainty about the type of uses that will be permitted in this town centre.

In addition to the statutory development plan and statutory supplementary guidance, the Council provides non-statutory planning guidance aimed at specific customer groups and interpreting policies on particular land uses. These include guidance on purpose-built student housing developments. This is under review – an issues paper was published for consultation in March 2015 and the results of this will inform the next steps.

Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth

The Planning and Building Standards service is working with Economic Development colleagues on the South East Scotland Economic Community to produce an economic framework and on the development of spatial and infrastructure aspects of the City Deal bid. This work is ongoing and links in with the preparation of the Main Issues Report for SESPlan 2.

The Service, along with Economic Development, is working with Scottish Borders Council and Midlothian Council on a Borders Railway Prospectus. The Prospectus will be used to help promote the opportunities the new railway will bring. It will also co-ordinate and help maximise the line's wider employment, tourism and accessibility benefits.

The service produces seven development schedules covering retail, office, industrial, leisure, student housing, hotels and housing. These schedules list completions, properties under construction, planning consents, applications awaiting determination and closures. The schedules have been published annually since 2008 (student housing since 2010) and provide detailed factual information. This information is used in plan-making and by developers, community councils and groups, councillors, council officers and members of the public. They have been praised for their coverage of development in key sectors of the economy.

Wayfinding - Planning and Building Standards is coordinating the development of a new Wayfinding system for Edinburgh. This can contribute to placemaking by providing information about the layout and composition of the city. Working with internal Council colleagues and external partners, the form, content and location of a new system has been agreed and put out to tender. This will be funded through revenue generated by the bus shelter advertising contact with JC Decaux. An early example has been developed for the Essential Edinburgh business members in Rose Street where we helped deliver new street directories. We are currently working with the Leith Chamber of Commerce to establish means of helping passengers and other visitors navigate their way from the Port of Leith Cruise liner terminal to Leith Town Centre. This will include new banners and signs.

In Queensferry, the service is working closely with colleagues and partners to harness the potential economic benefits that might derive from world heritage status for the Forth Bridge. Proposals are being developed that aim to ensure the benefits are not solely tourism related but also permeate into the everyday activities of the local community.

Our focus is on getting development on the ground and the work we do to ensure conditions and planning obligations are discharged is vital to the local economy. Work has now started on several high profile sites throughout the City such as New Waverley (Caltongate), Haymarket, St Andrew Square, Shrubhill and Pennywell and large scale projects, such as this, are not just important to the local economy but the Scottish economy as well.

We continue to collaborate with our Economic Development colleagues on the *Edinburgh 12* (and potential further sites). This is an initiative to progress the development of strategically important city centre sites. Planning has a key role to play and many sites have been assisted through this process. The Council is supporting the progress of these and other development opportunities through the services provided within the Edinburgh Premium and are routinely considering other development opportunities to support as part of a development pipeline. This will ensure that as one site progresses there are a range of identified sites waiting to replace it and receive appropriate support.



Case Study 2 – St James Quarter

The Council is supporting a £850 million project to redevelop the St James Shopping Centre and New St Andrew's House, creating a landmark development delivering a world class shopping offer, new homes, two new hotels, leisure facilities and a wide selection of cafes and restaurants.

The Planning and Building Standards Service has taken a lead on the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and works with the project manager at regular design meetings to get development started on the ground. A pre-let campaign has started in 2014 and continued until March 2015. A public inquiry will be held in 2015 on the CPO. Discussions continue with regards to the positioning of the lasting memorial to Nelson Mandela. Without the commitment of Planning and Building Standards time and resources to this development, the City's aspirations for this exceptional development would not be realised.



The following testimonial illustrates the value of the Edinburgh 12

"We've found the "Edinburgh 12" initiative to be a useful source of practical support for our development. The City of Edinburgh Council has helped facilitate the complex discussions with Network Rail around our tunnel strengthening works, as well as helping with the interaction between our development and surrounding utilities. The employability accord we have signed with the Council ensures we'll have access to the skills we need, as well as helping local people into work. As we look ahead to the completion of our development from 2017 onwards, I look forward to working with the Council to promote our development to occupiers."

David Westwater, Development Director, Interserve Developments

Planning is closely involved in the Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership, for which carbon reduction is a key priority. The Partnership has adopted the 'Sustainable Edinburgh 2020' vision: "Edinburgh in 2020 will be a low carbon, resource efficient city, delivering a resilient local economy and vibrant flourishing communities in a rich natural setting."

Working Together to Support Good Development

The service continues to be involved in the *Edinburgh Development Forum*, a one-stop shop for developers to engage with the planning system. The Forum is a vital component of understanding what developers need to bring new schemes to the City for its economic benefit.

We continue to work closely with community councils particularly on the engagement of the Second Proposed Local Development Plan where drop-in sessions were arranged in locations around the city for a more focused debate on how the City needs to develop.

The *Edinburgh Planning Concordat* has been working well over the past year and we continue to see many developers and community councils working collaboratively together for mutual benefit. This was confirmed at a Civic Forum in February 2015 where feedback from Barnton and Cramond Community Council praised the concordat as a good way of working. However, we need to empirically review how it is working and put forward proposals to refresh it to encourage more collaborative working between developers and community councils. This task is set out in our Service Plan for 2015-16.

Within the Council, the Planning and Building Standards Service takes a lead role in promoting the LDP Action Programme. The infrastructure enhancements this sets out represent significant capital investment. Some of this can be funded by developer contributions, but not all, and there are funding gaps. The Service has led a revised, corporate approach to identify these gaps and potential solutions.

In 2014-15, we have been preparing new protocols with other Council services and these are well advanced with colleagues who deal with flooding matters and environmental assessment matters. Services for Communities is a department which contains the main development services and this allows us to work closely together in relationships which have matured over the last five years. Joint working with other development services is a crucial part of getting development on the ground.

The new protocols set out what we can expect when working together, how we will communicate and engage and what supporting information is needed for consultation responses. This will help to ensure requests are proportionate as highlighted in the key markers report where the Council received amber for this. The new protocols will be ready in the 2015-16 year and will be launched at staff training events.

The working protocol with our colleagues in Estates and Economic Development has also been updated to include the Edinburgh 12, one of our main joint working initiatives and to include better working practices on Council land and buildings. Discussions are ongoing with our colleagues in Culture and Sport on a protocol which will ensure we work closely together to deliver new sports facilities and promote cultural activities.

Biodiversity officers from the service chair the Biodiversity Partnership made up of internal and external stakeholders and co-ordinate the Biodiversity Action Plan. Officers from the Natural Environment team also chair the Lothian and Fife Sustainable Urban Drainage group.

Case Study 3 – the Biodiversity Partnership

The City of Edinburgh Council is lead organisation for the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership. The Partnership is facilitated by officers from the Planning and Building Standards service Natural Environment Team. It comprises approximately 30 stakeholders, including government agencies, conservation bodies, environmental trusts and local expert conservation groups. The Partnership is responsible for the production and delivery of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan.

The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan enables joined up working to meet city-wide objectives for biodiversity conservation. Through the work of the Partnership, the Planning service is also able to access valuable natural heritage data from programmes of survey and monitoring. This informs our statutory work on assessing impacts on protected species and sites, and our work on designating Local Nature Reserves and Local Nature Conservation Sites. It also supports the wider work of the Council in meeting our statutory duty to further the conservation of biodiversity.

A recent stakeholder event to launch a review of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan was attended by over 50 people.



Planning and Building Standards Natural Environment officers also work in partnership with:

- Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership
- Lothian and Fife Green Network Partnership
- SEPA's Area Action Group for River Basin Management Planning
- Lothian and Borders GeoConservation Group

Our data management team works with internal and external stakeholders to ensure Geographical Information Systems for the City are up-to-date. This is crucial to the development process where the status of land and the constraints upon it must be known quickly. Work has commenced to improve the accessibility of our maps to ensure they work on mobile devices.

Meeting Our Customers' Needs

In 2014, the Planning and Building Standards service went through a structural review. The previous structure had a high number of middle managers and 'Single Status' had left same grade problems where officers were managing others on the same grade. The aims of the review were to:

- Resolve the same grade issues;
- Enhanced management efficiency, performance and productivity;
- Provide a structure that serves the customer better; and
- Introduce an area based strategic neighbourhood structure so that officers have a better understanding of the localities in which they are based.

The new structure was put into place on 27 October 2014. As part of the changes, 41 managerial posts were reduced to 25 with a saving of around £380,000. The changes have allowed the creation of a new Service Delivery Team which is focused on making improvements to the service and improving customers' journeys. Benefits realisation will be undertaken in 2015-16 so we can gauge the effectiveness of this change.

The Planning and Building Standards service was re-accredited in November 2014 with *Customer Service Excellence* as part of wider delivery with other services. This accreditation is an important award and it shows our commitment to improving the customer journey. However, we recognise that this journey is over-dependent on direct contact which is resource heavy and takes professional officers away from statutory processes such as preparing the Local Development Plan and determining planning applications. Demand for pre-application advice outstrips our ability to provide it and this service is dependent of staff overtime which cannot be sustained in the longer term.

Last year we looked at how we provided pre-application advice and whether we could charge for advice on major applications. This would give us the resources we need to improve our service on this. Surveys and discussions with agents were positive and there was general support from the development community. However, there are legal obstacles to doing this. Despite positive messages from the former Planning Minister in 2014, there is no immediate prospect of enacting legislation coming into force. Alternative proposals are therefore being investigated under our Customer 1st Project but this disappointing outcome delayed the project.

During 2014-15, we started work on a customer contact review to analyse how our customers were contacting us and why. Contact is by phone, email and face-to-face at the reception counter and our analysis has shown that many of these contacts are unnecessary as the information can be found online. The Customer 1st Project is looking at making 'channel shift' our core objective. This will move our customer to largely online transactions with customer contact being limited to those who need it. The latter half of 2014-15 has been focused on putting together a Customer Engagement Strategy that we can consult our customers on. The aim is to have a service which is responsive to customers' needs setting out

what they can expect and which delivers service efficiencies to improve our performance on our statutory functions. A new customer charter has been drafted and will be consulted on alongside the engagement strategy.

Supporting the Development Process

The review of our service structure led to a period of uncertainty in 2014. Change management processes were put into place in May 2014 to better manage the change and a transitional management structure was put in place at the same time. Additional temporary staff were recruited. These staff changes were necessary but disruptive and performance dropped in this period. Service improvement projects were put on hold as change management took priority.

The implementation of the *new structure in October 2014* has led to more stability and projects such as Customer 1st and Placemaking are now being progressed. Teams dealing with planning applications and enforcement are now based on an east-west locality model. Additional resource has been put into major applications with four separate teams now in place based on the strategic development areas of the City.

The Local Development Plan Action Group is a cross service working group of the Council to deliver the LDP Action Programme. This piece of joint working is an important step in ensuring the Development Plan is deliverable especially in terms of infrastructure requirements.

Processing agreements continue to be offered for all major developments and, in 2014-15, 61% of major applications had processing agreements. This is a decrease on the previous year but it is still significantly higher than most authorities and shows our commitment to dealing with major developments efficiently. One of the key aims of processing agreements is to agree what supporting information is needed to deal with the application and the consultee meeting that is held between the developer, planners and consultees is an important part of this process. These consultee meetings form part of the working protocols we have with other service areas and set out clearly what is needed to decide the application in time and any potential problem areas.

We now have two area based officers dealing with planning obligations as opposed to one previously. These officers are involved at the start of the process so the applicant is aware of the likely financial contributions they will have to make.

One of the intentions of the structural review was to put more officers on the frontline but this has been difficult to achieve in the context of a Council having to make budget cuts. Planning and Building Standards has had to make its contribution towards these savings. However, some additional staff were recruited during the transition to the new service and these planners have been retained this year. The recruitment of additional staff has been approved for 2015-16.

Despite these pressures, we have been able to continue giving a first rate pre-application service particularly for major developments and complex local developments/listed building consents. We also give advice on smaller developments through the use of staff overtime. In 2014-15, 36.9% of planning applications were subject to pre-application advice. This is an increase from 23.5% in 2013-14.

Technical and support services are provided on an area based system with technicians and support assistants working closely to ensure applications are checked and validated quickly. Around 25.3% of applications are invalid on receipt and an analysis of these cases shows that deficient fees, lack of correct

plans and elevations, including location plans and site plans, and incorrect certification are the main reasons for deficient applications. *Validation guidance* is available for applicants and agents and this sets out what supporting information is required for validation. We believe this to be in line with legislation and proportionate but it is intended to review this document in 2015-16 to ensure it is fit for purpose. As part of this review, we want to create appendices for different application types so we are clear we need more information for major applications than householder applications. We hope this will meet the concerns raised in the marker's report on proportionality of information requests.

Every planning application, big or small, is allocated to an individual planning officer who has ownership of the case. Case conferences are held in team meetings. Case officers are encouraged to carry out consultations quickly to avoid delays and any amendments are normally requested following the site visit and assessment of any representations. For householder and minor local developments, this process is reasonably straightforward.

In more complex cases, the case officer has specialist advisers on hand to get advice on design, trees, biodiversity, transport issues, flooding and environmental impacts. However, case officers have to make judgements about the advice they receive and will not always request the additional material an adviser is seeking unless it is absolutely necessary. As part of our ongoing work on new and refreshed protocols and the update of the validation guidance, it will be set out clearly to our consultees and our customers what information we will ask for to deal with planning applications.

High Quality Development on the Ground

Creating and shaping places of which we can all be proud.

The Placemaking Framework

Our vision for Planning and Building Standards is 'to put our service at the heart of placemaking in Edinburgh.' In 2014, we were very proud when the Edinburgh Design Guidance received a Scottish Quality Award. This document sets out how high quality placemaking can be achieved.

Case Study 4

The Edinburgh Design Guidance sets out our expectations for new buildings and spaces clearly, so that all those involved in future developments can understand from the outset what is required. It explains the key ideas which need to be considered as part of the design process.

The guidance complements current and proposed development plans which contain a number of policies to guide the delivery of high quality places and buildings in the city. These policies are designed to do the following:

- To ensure that new development is of the highest design quality and respects, safeguards and enhances the special character of the city;
- To ensure that the city develops in an integrated and sustainable manner; and
- To create new and distinctive places which support and enhance the special character of the city and meet the needs of residents and other users.



The restructuring of the service has led to the creation of a new Built Environment and Place Making team who lead on the development of the placemaking agenda. This includes working with the major development teams in the production of a new style of development briefs with a place focus as well as the continuation of other place-based work strands such as the ongoing review of conservation area character appraisals. The use of tools such as the new Place Standard for Scotland will be key part of the team's work in mainstreaming placemaking across the service.

Planning officers have joined multi-disciplinary teams such as 21st Century Homes and Children and Families Rising Rolls projects to provide planning advice and convince others of the need for a well planned and designed development. Value has been added through design in pre-application advice and by working with others such as Architecture and Design Scotland and NHS Lothian for major projects such as the Royal Edinburgh and the new Hospital for Sick Kids at Little France.

Case study 5 – Pennywell - 21st Century housing

The 21 Century homes regeneration programme is well underway. The programme aims to deliver 1400 new homes for sale and rent across key regeneration areas of the city. 50% of the new homes will be affordable. The first sites to be developed are at Gracemount, Greendykes and West Pilton Crescent. £9.1m worth of Scottish Government funding has been secured to support the programme.

West Pilton Crescent is in Pennywell. The masterplan for the entire Pennywell area was approved in September 2013. Some 700 homes will be delivered across five separate sites. These comprise a mix of affordable family housing and 1 and 2 bed flats. The masterplan area also comprises a new area office with café, a youth centre, multi-use games area and artists' studios. Alterations will also be made to the existing shopping centre and library / arts centre.

Phase two of the Pennywell masterplan will soon be submitted for detailed planning consent. Around 100 homes – a mix of affordable flats and family housing - will be considered.

The service carries out the naming and numbering of all new streets throughout the City. The names of streets help enhance the history of the area by utilising names which are relevant to the local area, as well as naming streets after nationally and internationally noteworthy people. In August 2014, we reviewed our policy and criteria for *new street names* to bring them up to date.

Strategic Development Areas

The current and proposed development plans focus the growth of the city on four Strategic Development Areas. This approach is consistent with the Strategic Development Plan and with the Council's Economic Strategy which seeks sustainable growth through investment in jobs – centred on development and regeneration, inward investment, support for businesses and helping unemployed people into work and learning.

City Centre:

Edinburgh's city centre is the vibrant hub of the City region. The Local Development Plan supports four major development opportunities in the City Centre: St James Quarter, New Waverley, Fountainbridge and Quatermile.

A Compulsory Purchase Order has now been approved for the St James Quarter with a public inquiry due to take place later in 2015. Approval of matters specified in conditions (AMC) applications have been submitted for the design of the majority of the building. The area around St Andrew Square has been the subject of studies to investigate the potential of revitalising these lanes and the linkages with the new St James development and we work closely with our Economic Development colleagues on this.

New consents were granted for New Waverley in 2014 and work has started on a new hotel at the site.



At Fountainbridge, construction is underway for the new Boroughmuir High School as well as a student housing block. Planning permission in principle will be granted once a legal agreement is in place for a mixed use development of including retail office, hotel and housing. Proposals been submitted for residential and mixed use development for the site to the north of Fountainbridge.

Construction continues at Quatermile with a proposal of application notice (PAN) received for changes to the proposals for the original hospital buildings at the north east corner of the site. Finding new uses for historic buildings such as the Old Royal High School is challenging in the context of the World Heritage Site but as a service we are focused on ensuring the economic vibrancy of the City Centre is enhanced.

South East Edinburgh:

This area is expected to experience major change over the next five to seven years.

Construction work has commenced on the new Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the BioQuarter and work has also commenced on the first phase of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital at Morningside. This required close working relationships with the NHS, Transport and Planning, especially regarding flood prevention works and design.



The proposed redevelopment of Craigmillar Town Centre has been approved in principle (subject to S75) to deliver shopping and leisure facilities as well as mixed tenure housing to continue the successful regeneration of this part of the city.

There has been an unprecedented pressure for the release of greenbelt sites for housing in the South East of the city. The sites identified in the LDP at Drum, Gilmerton Station Road, Burdiehouse, Broomhills, Brunstane and Newcraighall are expected to make a significant contribution to meeting SDP requirements.

Edinburgh Waterfront:

The regeneration of Edinburgh Waterfront, which covers Granton and Leith, has been guided by masterplans and frameworks prepared in collaboration with principal land owners. Forth Ports Ltd. now wants to concentrate on port activities on the northern and eastern parts of Leith Docks. However elsewhere in Leith and in Granton, development interest is picking up as economic conditions improve. Recent applications have been submitted at Forthquarter, Granton Harbour and Ocean Drive and a new housing site at Western Harbour is under construction.

West Edinburgh:

West Edinburgh is an area of national economic importance with significant potential to attract inward investment, create new jobs and develop new visitor infrastructure and facilities in a high quality and sustainable environment. The opportunity is a feature of the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework, in the context of airport growth and enhancements, and is recognised as an important economic development opportunity. Edinburgh Airport, the Royal Highland Centre and the International Business Gateway are promoted collectively as Edinburgh International. In addition, the Proposed LDP promotes housing on two greenfield sites as an integrated component of a business-led mixed use urban expansion of the City.



The Planning service has played a pivotal role in setting the context for new development in West Edinburgh; it has prepared and adopted an Alteration to the development plan, prepared a strategic design framework and a landscape framework. It is a member of the Edinburgh International Development Partnership Board and Working Group and is actively involved in design review exercises, in conjunction with Architecture + Design Scotland, to guide the preparation of masterplans and planning applications.

The Planning service is also working collaboratively with owners of Edinburgh Park to bring forward revised masterplan proposals.

Protecting our Historic Environment

The City of Edinburgh has 49 conservation areas. The majority of these areas were first designated over a period between 1971 and 1998. Character appraisals play an important role in planning decisions. Special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any affected conservation area. Appraisals provide a basis of understanding of that character and appearance to guide decision-making. They can also assist owners and developers in formulating proposals.

Work has been ongoing during 2014-15 on the updating of character appraisals and during this period the Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been finalised and the Queensferry and Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisals have been drafted for consultation. As part of this process, we have been working with schools to raise awareness of conservation and the built environment.

Case study 6 – Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal

In reviewing the Grange Conservation Area Character Appraisal, the planning authority adopted an inclusive approach and one that focussed on recent developments in the conservation area. This involved identifying sites that had been built since the approval of the original character appraisal in 1998 and asking the local community if they thought the resulting buildings:

a) reflected the contents of the character appraisal; and

b) whether the existing character appraisal reflected what they thought were the special characteristics of their area.

From this we developed the revised appraisal which highlighted issues raised through the process. It was also redesigned in a more user friendly format containing layers of mapped information that allows easier navigation throughout the document.

Comment from the Grange Association

“The Association very much appreciated being involved in the rewriting of the Grange CACA. We now hope that the planners will give this excellent document the attention it deserves when they consider planning applications in the Grange Conservation Area.”



In August 2014, we also reported on the monitoring of the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site. This [Monitoring Report](#) is produced by The City of Edinburgh Council on the behalf of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site Steering Group: which includes representation from Historic Scotland, The City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh World Heritage. The monitoring period covered April 2011 to March 2013 and noted it had not been one of significant change. The assessment suggests that the state of conservation of the World Heritage Site generally remains good. To reflect this, we submitted our work with Edinburgh World Heritage for a Quality Award in the category of partnership working.

Protecting the City's listed buildings is a major part of the work of the service. With 4845 items, Edinburgh has more listed buildings than any City outside London and 25% of Scotland's category A listed buildings.

There are currently 92 Edinburgh buildings on the Buildings at Risk Register. A number of the current 'at risk' buildings form part of high profile development sites and regeneration projects, including Craighouse, India Buildings and Panmure House.

As part of the Council's statutory duty to protect the historic environment, the service seeks to work with owners to support them in bringing an "at risk" building back into use, or to sell their property to

a restoring purchaser. This is done on a case by case basis, with a focus on properties which are in a deteriorating condition or have no known proposals for reuse. This can involve passing on enquiries from potential purchasers to owners; providing advice and information to owners and potential purchasers; monitoring condition of buildings; and working closely with owners to persuade them to develop proposals for reuse.

Enhancing the Natural Environment

High quality landscaping, green networks and improved habitats and ecosystems are vital to successful placemaking. Our service has in-house landscaping expertise to ensure that these are integrated into new development. Projects such as *Craigmillar Parkland* and the *West Edinburgh Landscape Framework* are examples of ongoing initiatives which recognise that the natural and built environment are interlinked. The council is also leading the way in preparing guidance on Sustainable Urban Drainage to ensure it is integrated into placemaking, not just an add-on.

Design expertise

The *Edinburgh Urban Design Panel* gives design advice on complex proposals. The Panel meets monthly and reviews between one and three schemes per meeting. It is an important element in the pre-application advice available to developers in Edinburgh. During 2014, the Panel carried out 19 reviews of development proposals within the city. Eighteen of these reviews were for developments that have resulted in, or are expected to result in, planning applications. One piece of guidance has been reviewed by the Panel this year and one development reviewed twice at the request of the Panel given its scale, complexity and significance within the World Heritage Site and the city.

Case officers are able to use in-house design expertise for advice on the quality of new proposals. Currently we have architects and urban designers who can advise on design solutions. This is largely for major applications and more complex local developments. Otherwise we mainstream design expertise through training to ensure all case officers can advise on high quality design.

We work proactively with architects and developers to achieve the highest standards. In 2014 we received a Scottish Quality Award commendation for Development on the Ground at 26 -31 Charlotte Square.

Case Study 7 - Development on the Ground 26 - 31 Charlotte Square

Completed in late 2013, the project relates to six former townhouses on the south side of Charlotte Square designed by Robert Adam and listed category A. The overall objective of the project was to permit a major office redevelopment with increased floorspace, whilst consolidating and restoring as much as possible in the main Charlotte Square buildings and maintaining all its existing character.



Following pre-application consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including the City of Edinburgh Council, Historic Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage, the project was considered by the Planning Committee within 4 months of the application being received. It is a stunning new development which marries our built heritage with modern office requirements. It is an example of collaborative working between planners, architects and developers to support the economic vitality of the City.

Measuring Design quality

In June 2012, the Committee approved a set of indicators that responded to the 'delivery of good quality development' element of the Planning Performance Framework. They reflect quantitative or qualitative factors that provide a representative picture of environmental conditions and provide a basis for comparison. The indicators were developed in association with Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland, the Cockburn Association, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Edinburgh World Heritage.

In August 2014, we reported the results of the third year of using the indicators. 77% of all respondents were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the quality of new buildings and the spaces around them in their local area. Compared to that, 2% said they were either fairly or very dissatisfied and 21% were either neutral or had no opinion. Satisfaction has decreased from 86% in 2012 with the level of dissatisfaction remaining much the same and an 8% increase in no opinion.

Whilst the above gives us an indication on the quality of new development as perceived by citizens and others in the City, we have also been capturing the 'added value' planning officers add to development proposals. Officers record what improvements have been made to schemes at pre-application and application stage and this allows us to measure our input by inserting the data into a template. In 2014-15 we met our service plan target and added value to 100% of major applications.

Added Value	Pre app				Application stage			
	At	Stage	Done	Not Done	At	Stage	Done	Not Done
City of Edinburgh Council	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Historic Scotland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Edinburgh World Heritage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
City of Edinburgh Council	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Historic Scotland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Edinburgh World Heritage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
City of Edinburgh Council	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Historic Scotland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Edinburgh World Heritage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
City of Edinburgh Council	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Historic Scotland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Edinburgh World Heritage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
City of Edinburgh Council	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Historic Scotland	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Edinburgh World Heritage	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

As we continue to embed this into our processes, we can analyse the link between the value we add to the success of the quality of the scheme.

Committee Tour

The Planning Committee goes on an annual tour of the City to see the outcomes of what has been approved and built. This is an invaluable learning experience as the ultimate test is the quality of what has been built on the ground. In 2014, the Committee concentrated on street design and visited schemes such as Quatermile, Craigmillar, Rose Street, and new housing in Ratho.

Local Environmental Improvements

As a Council, we are committed to improving the environment for all our citizens. Neighbourhood Teams deliver various improvements at local level. Neighbourhood Environmental Projects (NEPs) are suggested by local people and are proposed to local Housing Area Boards and Neighbourhood Partnerships

From the *Leith Programme* to new *cycle routes* and from *park improvements* to *air quality plans*, the Council is committed to ongoing improvement schemes.

Certainty

Consistency of advice, engagement and decision-making

A Robust Development Plan

A plan-led system is dependent on a robust development plan. The current development plan remains robust with only 40 applications granted contrary to the development plan. This is 1.1% of the 3547 decisions made in 2014-2015.

The *Proposed Local Development Plan* builds on this and puts forward policies to support the growth of the City economy; provide new homes; encourage sustainable transport systems to support access to jobs and services; protect and improve the environment; and help create strong, sustainable, healthier communities. It is acknowledged that delays in the adoption of this plan has created uncertainty and our focus this year has been on getting the Plan to examination stage.

In addition, the proposed *LDP Action Programme* provides a more focused approach to delivering infrastructure through estimating costs of essential infrastructure, identified funding sources, and specifying any funding gaps. Where a development's value is demonstrated to be insufficient to support the full cost of essential infrastructure, the resulting funding gap needs to be addressed. This could be achieved through other funding sources and the Action Programme informs the Council's budget setting for capital investment. The Action Programme sets out those who are responsible for delivery (landowners, key agencies and organisations) and, working with these development partners, sets out a timescale for implementation. This is a holistic approach involving all stakeholders including a range of Council services. Work has been ongoing throughout 2014-15 to keep the Action Programme on track since it was approved on 19 June 2014. This project will continue to be developed alongside the Local Development Plan and will be linked into other projects and strategies such as City Deal and Community Planning.

Supplementary guidance on Corstorphine and Gorgie/Dalry Town Centres gives more certainty about the likelihood of planning permission for changes of use as does the finalisation of masterplans for larger projects such as *Edinburgh Bio-quarter and South East Wedge Parkland*.

Certainty for Our Customers

The focus this year has been on developing a new Customer Engagement Strategy where we will explain what our customers can expect from us. The strategy will provide a framework for how we engage all our customers, helping to define our customer groups, their needs and improving the opportunities to engage in the planning process. The strategy will focus on improving online resources so that the customer can self-serve information and we can concentrate on improving performance. Work has started on a new customer charter as part of this project.

The *Edinburgh Planning Concordat* sets out how major applications are processed in Edinburgh and this helps both the developer and the community to understand the planning process. This also ties in with our use of processing agreements which we continue to encourage for every major application. The Concordat will be refreshed in 2015-16.

Detailed guidance is available on the Council website for most application types and our *Guidance for Householders* gives sufficient advice to create certainty for most straightforward householder applications. This is part of a suite of guidance helping potential applicants design an acceptable scheme. It is recognised that more complex cases require meetings and team managers co-ordinate these meetings. Supplementary guidance provides additional certainty in terms of proportionate policy advice.

Edinburgh's universities and colleges play a major part in the economy and life of the city. One of the core aims of the Edinburgh City Local Plan is to "support the growth of the city as a centre of learning and higher education". Likewise, Aim 3 of the proposed Local Development Plan recognises higher education as one of the key sectors in contributing to the strength of Edinburgh's economy.

The number of students living in the city is estimated to be in excess of 40,000 and represents about 12% of the overall population. Providing accommodation to meet the needs of this sector is vitally important. The Council has launched a consultation on this subject in order to review the approach currently being taken and explore whether changes are required to ensure that we can successfully facilitate student housing into local communities, while also meeting Edinburgh's wider housing needs.

Charters on service areas, such as street naming, ensure that the customer knows what to expect. Audits are carried out at regular intervals, to ensure consistency of output, decision making, and meeting of target timescales.

Certainty in Application Processing

Every case must be dealt with on its own merits and positive decisions cannot always be guaranteed for the applicant. Teams have regular review meetings to ensure that cases are on track, including one-to-one meetings with team managers. The aim is to ensure the applicant is aware of potential problems. Catching these cases early is key to certainty in the process.

19 out of 228 decisions in 2014-15 were the result of the Development Management Sub-Committee disagreeing with officer recommendation. Out of 3547 applications determined this year, this is only 0.5%.

Out of these, 6 were granted and 13 were refused. However, the figures also show that 48.1% of delegated refusals were overturned by the Edinburgh Local Review Body and 41 % of appeals were allowed. Whilst this creates less certainty in the process, the outcome may be more favourable to the applicant.

Most pre-application advice is now recorded in the IDOX document management system. This means that enquiries and responses are easier to find and available to all members of staff. In addition, this year we have embarked upon a records management project to improve our filing systems. This has involved a radical overhaul of shared drives and naming conventions plus the updating of our retention schedules. Our aim is to make it clearer to our customers what information we hold and what we can make available to them.

We continue to embed processing agreements as a priority for major development. In 2014-15, 61% of major applications had a PPA and 80% met the target committee date. Consultee meetings are held for every major application and this ensures that there are constructive discussions about the level of supporting information which will need to be provided with the application. This ensures information requests are proportionate and agreed in advance. All major applications and more complex local developments are project managed with the Committee date set in advance so all parties are aware of the target date.

Case Study 8 - Niddrie Mill primary School – working together

The school site and building will be redeveloped to provide 66 new homes on a brownfield site. To the east of the site is the Niddrie Burn which has a history of flooding problems.

At the consultee meeting, it was identified that supporting information, i.e. Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plan, would be required before we could progress the application. The



applicant, agent, planners, consultees and other stakeholders worked together to ensure the appropriate information was provided with the planning application. This example illustrates our protocols working well in practice and how we can agree proportionate supporting information as part of the application process.



Around 60% of all applications were made online through the E-Planning portal. This service uses wizards to guide applicants through the application process and ensures that all the necessary information is provided. However, the Council also publishes validation guidance to assist applicants when making an application. This will be reviewed in 2015-16 to make sure it is fit for purpose.

Invalid applications account for approximately 25.3% of applications which is around average but needs to be improved. All applications are registered by our Intake and Registration team and initial checks are done to ensure addresses are on the Corporate Address Gazetteer. Team technicians and support assistants are now responsible for the validation process. A target is set for validation within 4 working days of receipt of a valid application. Currently these targets are not being achieved consistently and further work needs to be done on this.

Decisions can only be issued when the legal agreement is signed and our experience is that applicants do not wish to sign these until they are ready to build so we do not include a fixed date into the processing agreement. However, we are reviewing our practice on this with proposals to speed up the conclusion of legal agreements and remove legacy cases due to be completed in 2015-16. Our refreshed webpage on [submitting a major application](#) has full guidance notes available including one on [processing agreements](#).

We continue to work on our 'legacy applications'. Currently there are 203 applications which predate 31 March 2014. During the reporting period, 66 applications over a year old were determined or withdrawn.

New protocols are being prepared with our consultees and other stakeholders and the updating of the validation guidance, in tandem with this, will ensure customers are aware of what they need to supply when applying for permission. Our existing protocols with services such as transport and economic development continue to work well as service level agreements where we set out how we work together.

Communications, engagement and customer service

Communications strategy for engagement and positive customer experience:

Engaging with our Customers

To celebrate the centenary of the Royal Town Planning Institute we decided to let the citizens of Edinburgh know about the good work the Planning and Building Standards Service does. We wanted to expand our engagement with people who do not normally get involved in development proposals and promote an understanding of 'planning' as a placemaking activity.

Case Study 9

100 years of Planning Edinburgh exhibition



When planners at the City of Edinburgh Council were asked to think about how they might mark the centenary of the RTPI, the idea of an exhibition seemed like a good way of capturing public interest and engaging with a large group of staff internally, some of whom would benefit from a refreshed enthusiasm about the merits of town planning. The story is told through a series of panels, each of which

covers a decade of the last century of the city's evolution. The predominant themes are drawn out and a key individual for each decade is highlighted –people who have exerted the greatest influence on how the city has been shaped.

The exhibition opened as part of the Edinburgh Doors Open Day programme in September 2014 and has moved around various venues across the city over a period of six months.

A series of evening talks was run in association with the exhibition including a planner, a writer and a politician. Responses from the public have been largely (but not entirely) positive. But they have demonstrated a widespread interest in the planning of the city.

We posted a blog about the exhibition and subsequently tweeted its travels around the city. The display of the exhibition at Waverley Station has been one of our most shared tweets with over 7,000 views. In addition, the exhibition was covered by the International Herald Tribune. The project has given us something to build on in terms of engaging the public in the next 100 years and confirmed our positivity about all the good things Planning can do.

Comments from its stay at the Gyle Shopping Centre

"A very interesting and informative exhibition –information I didn't think I could easily find anywhere else, thanks."

"Excellent to see the exhibition in a high visibility location and giving insights to the history and prospects for Planning in our great city."

"Excellent exhibition, planners need to engage more with the public to ensure that future Edinburgh moves forward positively in a manner that protects our wonderful city and surrounding green areas."

"Trust it is well displayed in other suitable malls etc. Such an excellent exhibition for Edinburgh residents to learn about the City development-can this be made available in book form please for tax payers to keep as a record."

"Great to see something like this in the shopping centre. Interesting!"

Customer Survey - This year, we carried out an extensive customer survey following the changes to our service structure. We received 184 responses from agents who use the service and the following is a summary of the outcomes and how we intend to address the comments.

Process

- More face to face contact would be good for smaller building warrant changes
- Clarify days case officers are available for completion inspections

Pre-application enquiries

- Quicker response times / unclear on contact details for pre-application advice
- Introduce pre-application forms for both planning and building standards
- Ensure other departments are involved and advice is consistent
- Overall timescales for processing applications is too long

- We are reviewing how our customers engage with us and will be publishing draft proposals soon
- We are reviewing how our customers contact us. Officers working days are usually found in email signatures and official documentation
- We are reviewing pre-application processes to make this more efficient, this will include the possible use of pre-application forms. Team Managers are the main point of contact for pre-app advice
- We have protocols between service areas and will be reviewing these to ensure they are working effectively
- One of the reasons for delay is the lack of supporting information submitted with applications for more significant cases. We will be updating our validation guidance this year, making it clear what is required to help process applications quicker

Administration

- Submitted information is getting lost
- Use the same online system to submit Building Warrants as ePlanning / limit to the file sizes / make paying fees simpler

- We are in the last stages of completing a records management project where all officers receive training on storage and processing of information
- The Scottish Government is due to launch eBuilding Standards in Summer 2016 which will address these issues

Planning Helpdesk/Reception

- Planning helpdesk telephones not being answered / Can't get through to the duty planner

- Currently the number of calls outstrips our resource and we will be launching a strategy aimed at managing this better in the near future.

Web content / records / guidance

- Local Review Body is not transparent and requires a webpage
- No link to tree information online
- Drainage records and historic records are available but not clear / hard to find

- We will review the webpage and promote links to the LRB committee papers
- A [new tree web page](#) has now been created
- All old planning records can be found online by inserting planning records into the search engine. We are aware of the issues with drainage records and are seeking to improve them.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning guidance on the website is not easy to find. Planning guidance is spread across the website /difficult to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We review our guidance regularly to reflect changing circumstances but we will be looking at new ways of improving the information we provide as part of our Customer 1st Project
<p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more staff to deal with the applications / cover for periods of leave sickness • Working from home – need telephone/ contact number to call • Some customer care training would help for more co-operative staff – improve communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New planning / building standards officers have been recruited to deal with workload pressures. We are also looking at ways of making our processes more efficient • We now have a home working protocol and staff have access to mobile phones • All staff have recently completed customer care training. We continue to analyse complaints and learn from them.

In February and March 2015, we consulted the Edinburgh Civic Forum and the Edinburgh Development Forum on their views on last year's PPF and what they would like to see in this PPF.

The Civic Forum offered the following responses:

- Necessary guidance is in place but is ignored;
- Feels that technical terminology is frequently used that people don't understand, e.g. PAN;
- Feel that reporters often approve applications which are contrary to the Plan and the government intervenes on occasion;
- Feel it is no longer a plan-led system. Want to see the reporter taking into account their views/ representations to the proposed LDP before approving sites such as Burdiehouse and Edmonstone;
- Object to the use of term 'customer';
- Survey questions are not appropriate and quite misleading. Many could be split into two separate questions;
- Would like the survey to be sent to Community Councils as well as Neighbourhood Partnerships;
- Feel the Council congratulate themselves too much with regards to their service;
- Feels developers know that enforcement action isn't going to be taken against them, which results in sub-standard development; and
- Enforcement has some success with small things such as fencing, but not with more important issues where the architects/developers have gone against the planning permission.

The Edinburgh Development Forum made suggestions such as:

- A monitoring report on the delivery of the plan is required;
- Air quality should be included;
- Sustainable economic growth needs to be included in determinations;
- Performance on legal agreements should be included;
- Need to educate opponents of development. Needs to be a shift in attitude;
- Need a better relationship with Civic Forum; and
- Officer training needed on drivers for development.

We also held a workshop with our Planning Committee on last year's PPF and what would be in this one. Councillors were particularly keen for us to highlight the good new housing developments that are being delivered around the City in a variety of places from Ratho to Gracemount. Discussions on working protocols with colleagues in Building Standards and how we can resolve legacy cases were high on their agenda but it was how we engage and communicate that was of greatest interest and particularly how we can encourage developers and communities to work better together.

Customer Engagement Strategy

As stated above, we started work on our new Customer Engagement Strategy this year and the draft strategy is due to be considered by the Planning Committee in June 2015. The strategy has been developed in the context of the Council's transformational change programme and the need to create better services with less staff. Our strategy is focused on moving our customers to digital contacts – website, social media, mobile apps. We want to create a self-serve culture where our customers can easily find the information they need.

Our pre-application service will be re-focused with direct contact being available for the major and more complex applications but customers directed to where they can find the information themselves in other cases. Online enquiry and pre-application advice forms will allow us to capture what we need to be able to answer enquiries quicker. All our documents will be reviewed to make sure they are in plain English. All council documents have information on conversion to Braille or large print.

A new Planning and Building Standards Service Charter will form part of the engagement strategy.

The draft strategy and charter will go out for public consultation before it is finalised.

Getting Communities Involved

As part of the engagement on the Second Proposed Local Development Plan, we decided to proactively engage through:

- Notification to everyone who had responded at the first Proposed Plan or Main Issues Report stage;
- Neighbour notification in the way set out in legislation;
- Drop-in engagement sessions held in those areas where significant changes are proposed. Additionally, a more general session was held in the city centre. These aimed to help inform the general public about the Plan and how they could make representations if they wished; and
- Providing summaries of the Plan's proposals by Neighbourhood Partnership area which were distributed to community councils.

This engagement was a result of the feedback about the lack of understanding of the first Proposed Local Development Plan and the requests from communities for help in understanding how they can affect the second Proposed Plan. The six drop-in engagement sessions were the main focus of staff resources. Feedback forms were used. These indicated a good turnout and that 67% of those giving feedback found the event 'good' or 'very good'.

Work started in February 2015 on the consultation strategy for a review of student housing in the City and we now use the Council's consultation hub for our consultations. This ensures as many citizens as possible

are engaged in what we do. We also engage with the public and get schools involved for the naming of new streets in their area.

From character appraisals, the Forth Bridge School writing project, Street Name banks to working with universities, community councils and residents associations, our engagement covers a wide range of stakeholders.

Community Councils and Community Planning

We continue to work closely with community councils. In May and June 2014, we delivered training for community councils on the planning system. This covered the Development Plan, major applications, making planning decisions and enforcement. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Here is some feedback from Morningside Community Council:

"The meeting was led by Nancy Jamieson assisted by various other planning officials. They covered the Strategic Development Plan, the Local Development Plan and the Edinburgh Concordat. They outlined how CCs are involved in major applications at the pre-application stage and when the application has been made. They also explained how the Council Planners make their decisions and how they take enforcement action when things go wrong. It was a most illuminating meeting and future sessions are highly recommended for CCLRs who are unfamiliar with the basics of the planning system."

Our [Planning Blog](#) reported on the training and included some pictures of the event.

Planning works closely with our Community Planning colleagues on various working groups and a priority is to create better links between Community Planning and Spatial Planning. This will be a service priority in 2015-16.

We have also been working with schools on projects such as the character appraisals and the Forth Bridge World Heritage site designation.

Connecting to Our Customers

The Council's website was redesigned last year, making it more accessible on mobile and tablet devices as more of our customers are now using these devices. This change gave us the opportunity to rationalise our online information focussing on key customer transactions such as viewing, commenting and applying for permissions online.

The service has now embarked on a process to review how our customers contact us and journey they take. The emphasis will be on 'channel shift' to help customers make greater use of our online information and processes. The outcome will help to reduce unnecessary contact, saving this for those who require a greater degree of help.

The [Planning Service Twitter account](#) continues to grow in interest and remains the most followed local planning authority in Scotland with over 1800 followers. This is almost 400 new followers since the last PPF. The use of social media is becoming a key aspect of how we communicate and its use will be developed further as we move towards 'channel shift'.

The *Planning Edinburgh blog* continues to increase in popularity with over 180 subscribers and over 40 blog posts to date. The blog has now replaced the quarterly Planning News publication allowing us to post up to date information, reducing lead in times and the production process. Last year we have shared good practice with other planning authorities on our use of social media at Improvement Service training and this was well received.

Case Study 10 – Trees Hedges and Overhanging Foliage

Prior to the new service structure, tree enquiries and applications were done by email exchange with the Planning and Building Standards Service manually uploading the cases into the back office systems. This was resource intensive and rather surprising as tree applications can be made online via E-Planning. We decided to encourage a change in culture.

A new web page has been developed on trees. This directs customers to check for themselves if the tree has protection and if so, how to apply for permission to fell or severely lop it. Direct links are provided to E-Planning. Email responses have been changed to direct customers to this webpage and self serve. A mail shot will be carried out to our frequent agents to direct them to this page and E-Planning.

This past year we upgraded our document management system which has improved how we manage our electronic records such as pre-application enquiries. Our customers have also benefited from some additional functionality such as information opening as PDF documents.

The Council has now broadened the use of *webcasting* to include the Planning Committee and Development Management Sub-Committees. This aspect of the planning process can now be watched live with the webcasts archived for viewing later. This has increased the transparency in the decision-making process and engages a much wider audience than before.



Change Management

As part of the change management programme as we moved to our new service structure in 2014, we were keen to make sure our customers were aware of the changes and the implications for our service delivery. Full details were put on our *Planning Blog* and this included a leaflet showing maps and contact details. All officers were told to direct the customer to the blog for information.

A new web page was set up to allow a *team search*. This means that when the address is put into the page, it will tell the customer which team will deal with their enquiry and give a link to the email address.

We also did a customer survey following the changes to gauge levels of customer satisfaction. This showed a high level of pre-application advice is sought from us and around 53% found the overall quality excellent or good. Speed of decision-making was raised as a problem area and access to officers was a concern. However, the level of overall satisfaction showed over 45% was either very or quite satisfied and another 28% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. These results will help us move forward with our Customer Engagement Strategy as we look to make service improvements.

Case Study 11 - Sharing change with our customers

A key aspect of the review of the Planning and Building Standards was to communicate the changes with all our customer groups. A communication plan was prepared to ensure a range of methods were used to suit different customer groups. This included a blog post, tweets about the changes, a leaflet (online with paper copies in libraries) and briefings at the Edinburgh Development Forum and the Civic Forum.



Customer Service Excellence

The Planning and Building Standards Service achieved Customer Service Excellence (CSE) re-accreditation in November 2014. CSE is an important way of assessing whether we meet our customers' requirements and this year we did a detailed analysis of the customer journey to illustrate the complexities of dealing with a wide range of customers many with competing demands. This information has informed our draft Customer Engagement Strategy.

Customer 1st Project

The Council faces a number of budgetary challenges and there is no doubt we have to develop a smarter, more efficient way of working embracing 'channel shift'. The Customer 1st Project interlinks the previous Customer Contact Review with the pre-application project to further develop how we consult and communicate with our customers. Consultation on this strategy allows all our customers to have their say. Updating of our Customer Charter has started as part of the Customer 1st Project, the aim being to produce a meaningful, easy to read document setting out how we will deliver our customer service.

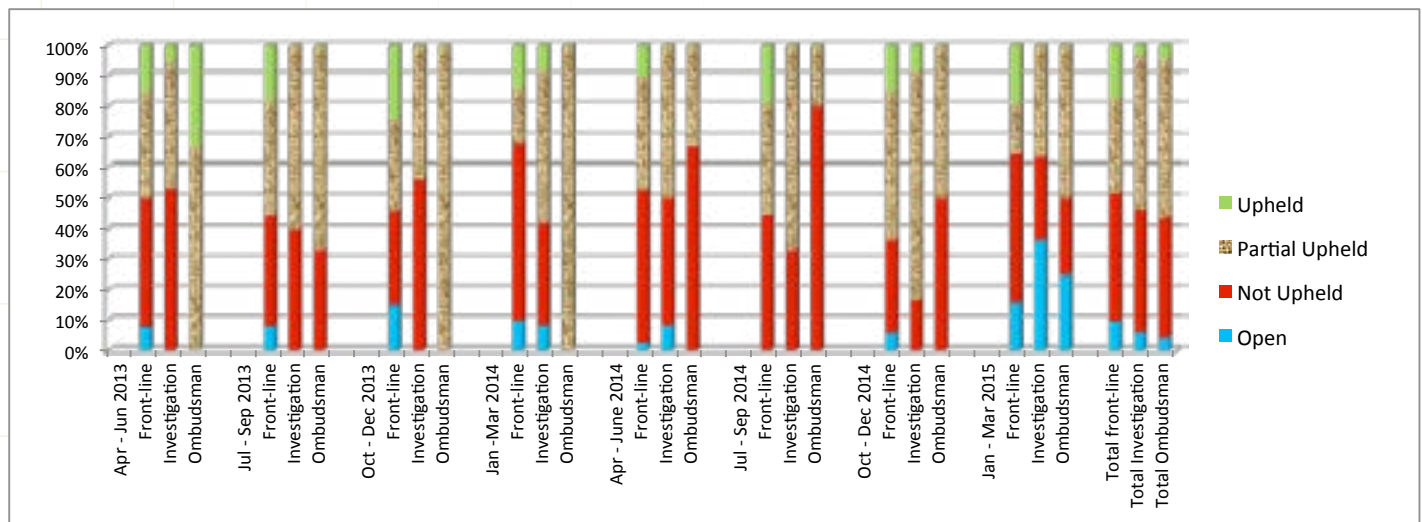
The Customer 1st Project is at the centre of staff engagement and this year all staff underwent Customer 1st workshop training to discuss how we engage with our customers and how this could be improved. The resulting Action Plan will be implemented in 2015-2016.

We also completed a review of how we handled complaints this year and re-engineered the process to streamline it. During 2014, Planning and Building Standards received 215 formal complaints and 42 compliments. In the winter of 2014-15, a review was undertaken as to how the service processes complaints and a leaner process has been adopted now with fewer steps. Complaints and associated

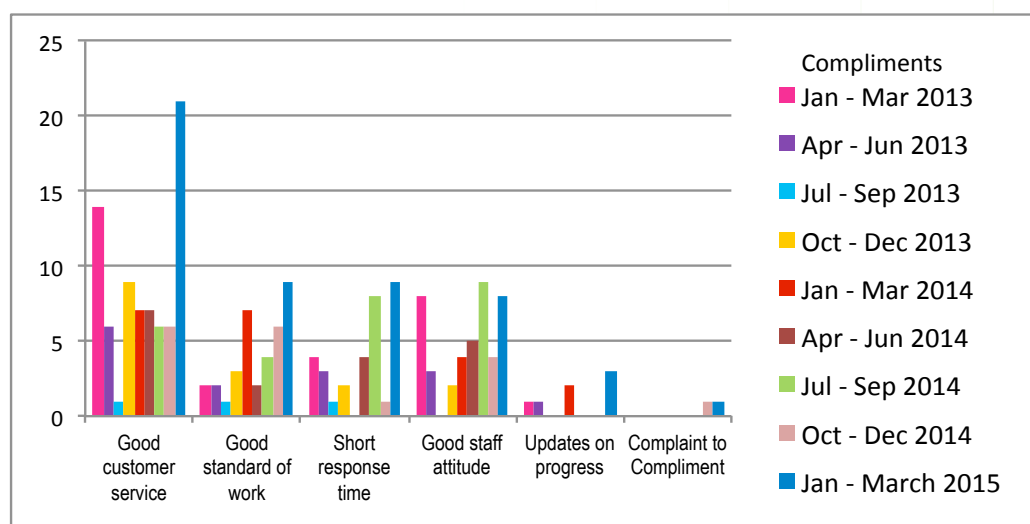
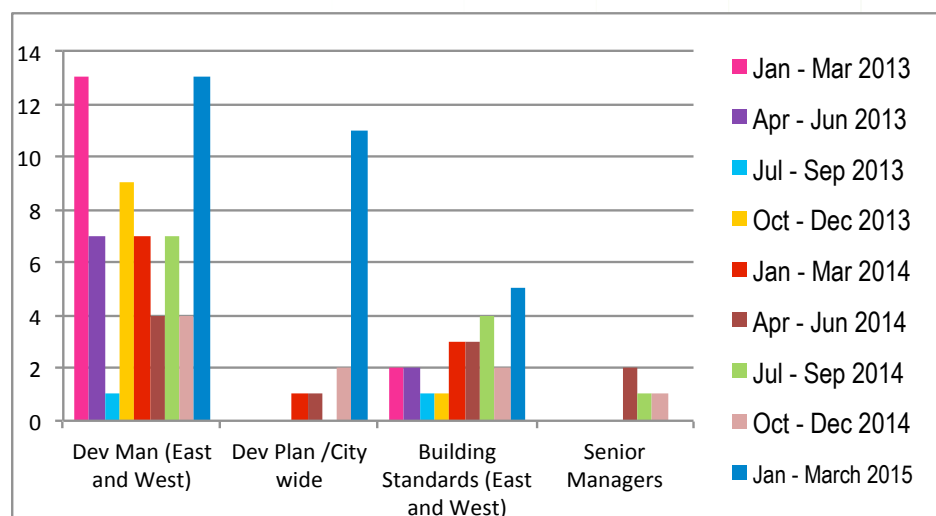
responses are filed electronically in the same file area, no matter under whose signature the reply is sent out. During training workshops for staff about the new processes, staff were also provided with feedback on where escalated complaints were upheld wholly, or partly, in favour of the complainant. In some cases procedures and practices have been amended in the light of this feedback. For example, we now inform enforcement complainants if an appeal has been received on an enforcement notice and officers have been reminded they need to respond to requests for information as part of their objection to an application.

The table below gives an indication of the number of complaints and the outcomes in 2014.

	Open	Not Upheld	Partial Upheld	Upheld
Oct - Dec 2014				
Front-line	2	10	16	5
Investigation	0	2	9	1
Ombudsman	0	1	1	0
Total front-line	34	150	109	62
Total Investigation	6	39	50	3
Total Ombudsman	1	9	12	1



Compliments have also been recorded as set out below



Efficient and Effective Decision-making

Ensuring structures and processes are proportionate

Decision Making Systems

There are two schemes of delegation – the statutory scheme for local developments and the scheme under the 1973 Local Government Act for other application types. In 2014-15, 94% of applications were processed by officers under delegated powers. The scheme is well balanced and allows discretion for complex or contentious cases to be decided by Committee whilst even cases with objections can be decided by officers.

The Committee structure is tried and tested and works well. The Planning Committee sets high level policy and strategy, the Development Management Sub-Committee takes decisions on planning applications and there are three Local Review Body panels. The Development Management Sub-Committee and Local Review Body normally meet every 2 weeks to ensure the business is dealt with promptly.

Team Structures

Following the implementation of the new team structure in October 2014, each team has a team manager who is responsible for the performance and decision-making standards of the team. Regular 1 to 1 meetings, team meetings and Performance Reviews and Appraisals are in place to improve performance. Consistency is achieved through cross team meetings and the use of the Procedures Manual, an online facility which holds all our information on planning processes and procedures. The validation of applications has been embedded into the area teams to reduce the number of steps to validate the application.

Dealing with Delays

The Service has met its scheduled targets for preparing Local Development Plan project outputs since October 2013, when it was confirmed that a Second Proposed Plan was necessary. However, due to the major implications of the Plan for local communities, the reporting and consideration of key stages by the Planning Committee has required additional time, resulting in rescheduled reports in June 2014 and May 2015. The implications of these delays for the date of submission to Scottish Ministers and adoption have been set out in each Development Plan Scheme update.

Planning Obligations – the processing of S75 legal agreements has been outsourced to improve efficiency and, combined with a new process for dealing with legacy cases, it is expected to improve our performance.

Legacy applications

Previously we treated legacy cases as those being over 3 years old and last year we processed or withdrew 63% of these old cases, 147 in number. The definition of a legacy case is now over a year old and as at 31 March 2015, we had 203 such cases. During 2014-15, we processed 66 cases which were over 1 year old either by requesting withdrawal or taking a decision to approve or refuse. The new process for dealing with legacy cases which comes into place in June 2015 will see a further reduction in these cases.

Process changes

The new team structure was implemented on 27 October 2014 and one of the new teams, the Service Delivery Team, began looking at how we could re-engineer processes to make them more efficient. The following processes have been re-engineered to make them more efficient:

Validation of applications – the new team structure includes customer support assistants in the teams who are now responsible for the validation of applications. They work closely with the team technician and team manager to ensure that the validation of applications happens as quickly as possible.

Appeals – we now process these completely electronically. Documents downloaded from the download manager are now put into a folder where the case officer has early access to it for the appeal response form. A guidance document was developed so officers are clear about what they have to provide and by when and this includes links to all forms and folders. This has speeded up the process as officers no longer have to wait for the DPEA to upload documents.

Local Review Body process – again this is now done fully electronically. Previously forms and other supporting information were scanned in even when received electronically. Reviews made online are now put in a folder as combined pdfs which are uploaded onto Public Access and the same documents are used by Committee services for the Local Review Body papers. Previously there was a lot of rescanning and double handling.

Pre-application Reports – these are now done through computerised systems rather than as word documents to ensure a more efficient and consistent reporting system.

Trees – a new process for dealing with tree enquires and applications, allows the public to self serve and decide whether they need to make an application. They are then directed to E-Planning to make the application.

Planning Obligations – following the changes to team structures, it was unclear who was responsible for the checking and validation of these applications. This has now been reviewed and new guidance has been issued to support staff to ensure consistency.

Report templates – standard reports have been developed for window and driveway applications to promote better consistency.

Complaints Process – this has been re-engineered to make it fully electronic. Filing of complaints has been completely revised and new processes are in place for sign off.

Records Management – this project started in 2014 and we have now captured all our current records systems and we are beginning to completely re-organise them to meet Information Commissioner standards. A new shared drive has been set up and folders created. Our retention schedules have been updated and trawling of old files will start in 2015-16 so we can destroy information that no longer needs to be held. Scripts will be run on electronic records to remove old documents. Our customer engagement strategy and charter will make it clear what records we hold.

Performance Reporting – this had not been updated for many years and a new format report is now being produced monthly with more accurate figures. Access reports have been updated and graphs introduced to show visually how we are performing.



The Service Delivery team will be trained in Lean Theory and it is proposed to review our enforcement and validation processes in the 2015-16 year.

Working with other services

During 2014-15, we have been working on a number of protocols with other services, in particular our colleagues in Flooding and Environmental Assessment. These protocols are almost complete and a new section has been introduced on validation requirements for these services. These will set out clearly what supporting information is required for planning applications.

Following the work we did on conditions last year, we have been getting positive feedback from our colleagues in Environmental Assessment about how this is working in practice. Here is a comment from one of the Environmental Assessment officers we work closely with:

"There are a number of positive outcomes, but to be specific, the way in which commercial ventilation is dealt with has been welcomed by both Environmental Assessment and Public Health Officers.

With regards to applications for use class 3 units below residential properties Environmental Assessment previously requested that the following condition was attached;

- i. *(i) The kitchen shall be ventilated by a system capable of achieving a minimum of 30 air changes per hour, and cooking effluvia shall be ducted to * to ensure that no cooking odour escape or are exhausted into any neighbouring premises.*
- ii. *(ii) The ventilation system shall be installed, tested and operational, prior to the use hereby approved being taken up.*

This was not specific and if Public Health officers received an odour complaint they did not have plans or details of what the operator should have installed to control cooking odours. We now request detailed information is provided up-front, for example drawings and elevations showing where the flue will be located and terminates with specific calculations demonstrating that the extraction rate of 30 air changes per hour can be achieved. This is then conditioned with reference to the submitted drawing numbers. Importantly this now empowers the Public Health Officers with specific details of what ventilation system should be installed in the use class 3 unit.

Already Public Health Officers have received odour complaints about premises that have provided ventilation details during the planning stage as described above but not physically carried out the work. Enforcement has been far easier as the Public Health Officers have all the agreed ventilation details available on the planning portal."

The use of conditions had decreased slightly from 2212 in 2013-14 to 2085 in 2014-15 but further work needs to be done on this to ensure compatibility with the guidance.

In addition, we have worked with other Council services on a number of cross cutting programmes:

- BOLD programme – Channel Shift - implement for our customer transactions in line with our Customer first project;
- Local Development Plan Action Programme
- Street Design Guidance with our Transport colleagues

Effective Management Structures

ensuring management structures are effective and fit for purpose

A New Service Structure

On 27 October 2014, we launched our refreshed Planning and Building Standard Service following a Management Review.

The aims of the review were to:

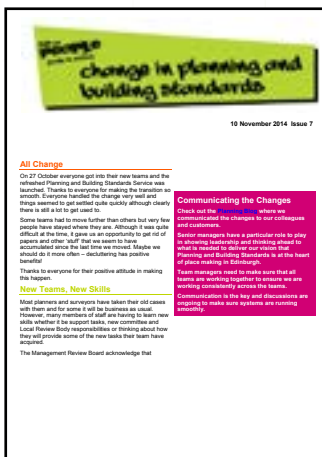
- Resolve the same grade issues;
- Enhance management efficiency, performance and productivity;
- Provide a structure that serves the customer better; and
- Introduce an area based strategic neighbourhood structure so that officers have a better understanding of the localities in which they are based.

The service now has a more area-based focus with teams based on an east and west split allocated across the City to deal with planning and building warrant applications. This was to integrate both these processes and has brought our enforcement and listed building functions into the area teams. The major applications are handled in central, west, east and waterfront areas of the city.

The service also has a city-wide function progressing key areas such as the development plan and the built and natural environment. The built environment team has an emphasis on placemaking, with the natural environment team now responsible for issues such as tree enquiries and high hedge applications.

The review has reduced the number of middle managers to provide a more streamlined management structure. Some of the cost savings have allowed investment in frontline staff. The implementation of the new structure has meant significant upheaval but the changes have now bedded down and service improvements are now our focus. These changes link with the wider aims of the Council to deliver a more agile, streamlined service in the context of resource challenges. We believe we have produced a service structure which is fit for purpose and will work well.

Staff Communication - During the process of the management review, a Change Management Group made up a staff from across the service was used to act as a sounding board for the forthcoming change. Since the introduction of the refreshed service, the group has been reformed as a Staff Engagement Group with the remit of communicating the views of staff. The group are involved in the preparation of the annual service-wide staff briefing events. The outcomes of the briefings will inform individual staff objectives and how we work towards our vision *'to put our service at the heart of place making in Edinburgh.'*



The Planning and Building Standards Leadership Team

The Planning and Building Standards Leadership Team is made up of the Head of Planning and Building Standards, three senior managers and a business manager. This meets weekly to set the direction of the Service in the context of the wider department and the Council. The PBSLT has regular staffing meetings to discuss resources and succession planning. The business manager works closely with Finance to ensure the budget is kept on track. However, it is acknowledged that although income has increased, it has been difficult to get agreement for further staff recruitment due to wider Council restrictions on spending and the need to save money. This is now being addressed.

The team structures are flexible and workload can be re-allocated where necessary. For instance, officers in the major teams will process local developments when workload on major developments is low. Officers from other teams also helped to meet the deadline for the LDP Committee report.

Performance Reporting

As stated above, we have reviewed how performance is reported to the leadership team. Old access reports meant that some of the performance reporting was inaccurate and the new system is more closely aligned with the data given to the Scottish Government for the annual statistics. In particular, we have taken out some application types (Proposal of Application Notices, tree applications) from the general figures as these were skewing the data on the planning application performance. We now collect:

- Planning and building warrant data together;
- Major application performance data;
- Income received;
- Numbers of pre-application enquiries;
- Planning obligations numbers and payments;
- Area based performance on householder, non-householder and listed building consents;
- Registration process and timescales;
- Electronic submissions;
- Treework caseload;
- Enforcement caseload; and
- Local review body cases.

This new reporting system allows managers to see more clearly where performance problems lie.

Working with other Authorities

In 2014-15, Councillor Ian Perry of the City of Edinburgh Council was the chair of the SESPlan Joint Committee and chaired difficult negotiations on housing land supply and other challenging planning issues. Public consultation on the new Main Issues Report is due to start in summer 2015.

Benchmarking with our Solace partners takes place regularly and meetings were held in May and November 2014 between Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire. These meetings discuss performance and procedural issues and are invaluable ways of considering service improvements.

Financial Management and Local Governance

Our Business Plan sets out the following financial priorities:

- Review our monitoring of Section 75 financial contributions;
- Deliver new governance for infrastructure investment to meet the Local Development Plan Action Programme; and
- Monitor our income and manage our budget within the resource provided.

A number of savings were made in 2014-15 as a result of the Management Review and the reduction in the number of middle managers. Some re-investment took place but the main impacts will be delivered in 2015-16.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Innovative Edinburgh

Staff training - Our Staff Development Group comprises 11 representatives from across the Planning and Building Standards Service. Its role is to organise and support learning and development activities to meet service requirements and the needs of individuals. In 2014 – 2015 we held five meetings and arranged 12 internal training events on a range of topics including impact and influencing skills for managers, quality indicators, design skills, developer contributions and customer service.

The Staff Development Group is also responsible for managing the training budget. In addition to internal events, we helped support three members of staff to undertake further education courses and funded attendance at various conferences and seminars, for examples the Young Planners Conference, Conservation Master Classes, Energy Standards and Town Centres.

Our staff are our most valuable resource and, this year, the changes to our Service structure caused uncertainty. This was mitigated by the Change Management programme that was put into place and a new Staff Engagement Group was started in November 2014 to take forward our plans for better consultation and communication. This is especially important as the Council goes through a period of transformational change.

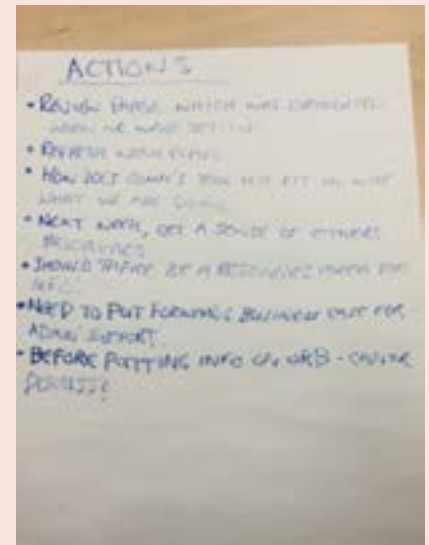
As part of the implementation of the new structure, various managerial events and training sessions were held to ensure that the new managers were ready for their new roles. One of these was called a New Manager Assimilation exercise.

Case Study 12 – New Manager Assimilation

What is it? – it is a brainstorming session which compresses a team getting to know their manager in half a day. It is a valuable step to ensure a team becomes productive after a major change

What happens? – after an introduction, the manager leaves the room and the team is left with a facilitator who asks the team a standard set of questions – what do you know about your manager? What would you like to know? What is your manager doing well? What is your manager doing not so well? What are the major challenges for the upcoming year?

What is the outcome? - the team gets to know their manager better and an action plan guides the way forward as a team. Shared understanding promotes productivity. Above is an action plan from the Service Delivery Team's session



Elected member training – In addition to staff training, elected member training is an ongoing process to ensure members are fully aware of current planning issues. During 2014-15, the following training was carried out for elected members on the Planning Committee:

- Windows (Awareness Raising);
- Committee Tour: Street Design;
- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (Workshop);
- Student Housing (Workshop);
- Advertisements (Awareness Raising);
- LDP Issues and Reps (Workshop);
- Additional LDP Issues and Reps (Workshop);
- Density and Parking Standards (Awareness Raising); and
- The Planning Performance Framework and our Service Improvement Priorities? (Workshop).

The training programme for councillor training is set out in a yearly Committee report.

In addition to this, we carried our refresher training for ward councillors and councillors' assistants on the planning system. This covered Local Plans, application processing and enforcement.

Sharing Good Practice

Officers from the service continue to be heavily involved in Heads of Planning Scotland, working closely with other planning authorities to promote continuous and consistent improvements in Planning in Scotland. Benchmarking meetings have also been held in May 2014 and November 2014 with our Solace partners to discuss performance and service issues.

Glasgow-Edinburgh liaison meetings are held every 6 months to discuss common themes and objectives.

Officers have taken part in Improvement Service events such as promoting the use of Social Media.

Service Improvements

In 2014-15 our Service Plan focused on a number of key improvements. The full objectives are set out in section 4 of our PPF but these are a few examples of what we have achieved.

- **90% of approved major developments within the year to show added value quality improvements.** This was achieved.
- **Report 2nd Proposed LDP to 12 June 2014 Planning Committee, for approval; if approved, publish for representations during August and September and report to Committee by end of March 2015.** This was partly achieved as the report to Committee was in May 2015.
- **Produce an action plan and implementation programme for all customer contact channels.** The initial survey work was completed and this is now being taken forward as part of our Customer Engagement Strategy.
- **Review and implement joint working protocols with other service areas to improve communications and efficiency including Estates, Economic Development, Culture and Sport, Flooding and Planning, Transport and Edinburgh World Heritage.** This was partially achieved in terms of updating the protocols with Estates and Economic Development and Edinburgh World Heritage. The protocols on Flooding and Environmental assessment are progressing well and the review of the Transport protocol will start in 2015-16.
- **Engage with young people in a range of projects including: 100 years of Planning in Edinburgh, the town centre supplementary guidance and the reviews of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Area Development Frameworks.** This was carried out in 2014-15 by working with schools on a number of projects, including the Forth Bridge Writing Competition.
- **Implement a programme of management development skills to allow managers to lead the service and champion corporate values.** This was carried out as part of the review of our service structure.

In 2015-16, we have an ambitious programme for carrying these improvements forward. Again these are set out in section 4 but examples include:

- Adopt the Proposed LDP by end of March 2016;
- Promote our placemaking role to put Planning and Building Standards at the heart of Placemaking across the City;

- Prepare and implement a Customer Engagement strategy and new Customer Service Charter;
- Review the implementation of Manager Assimilation Action Plans identifying areas where further training and support is needed to manage the service and champion corporate values;
- Lean Reviews of Statutory Processes to pinpoint areas for improved service delivery; and
- Promote our collaborative approach with other service areas by implementing a range of joint working initiatives including new and refreshed working protocols and service level agreements.

Our one-page Business Plan for 2015-16 sets out our four main priorities:

- **PLACEMAKING** - To position Planning and Building Standards at the heart of Edinburgh's commitment to Placemaking;
- **CUSTOMER** – Putting the Customer first by prioritising key service delivery to meet customer needs;
- **PARTNERSHIP** – To improve partnership working with key stakeholders to create innovative and quality solutions to the protection and development of our city; and
- **PERFORMANCE** - To attain our new Performance Standards in relation to the processing of planning applications and building warrants.

Part 3

Supporting Evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources:

- 100 Years of Planning exhibition*
- 21st Century Homes*
- Air Quality*
- Applying for permission*
- Biodiversity Action Plan*
- Biodiversity Partnership*
- Borders Railway Prospectus*
- Charlotte Square – development on the ground*
- Conservation in Edinburgh*
- Corstorphine Town Centre Supplementary Guidance*
- Council Complaints Policy*
- Council Papers Online*
- Council scheme of delegation*
- Customer Service Excellence*
- Cycling projects in Edinburgh*
- Development Activity Reports*
- Development Plan Scheme*
- Edinburgh 12 project*
- Edinburgh Bio-quarter – development on the ground*
- Edinburgh Bio-quarter and SE Wedge Parkland Supplementary Guidance*
- Edinburgh Design Guidance*
- Edinburgh Development Forum*
- Edinburgh’s Economic Strategy*
- Edinburgh’s Local Plans*
- Edinburgh Planning Blog*
- Edinburgh Planning Concordat*
- Edinburgh Twitter account*
- Edinburgh Urban Design Panel*
- Edinburgh Waterfront – development on the ground*
- Edinburgh World Heritage Monitoring Report*
- Essential Edinburgh – Rose Street Project*
- Forth Bridge Writing Competition*
- Gorgie/Dalry Town Centre Supplementary Guidance*
- Haymarket – development on the ground*
- International Business Gateway*
- Leith Programme*
- Major application processing*
- National Planning Framework*
- New Waverley – development on the ground*
- Organise to Deliver – Transformational Change*
- Pennywell redevelopment*
- Permissions for development – one door approach*
- Planning Blog – service structure changes*
- Planning Committee Report – Environmental Quality Indicators*
- Planning Committee Report – Housing Land Supplementary Guidance*
- Planning Committee Report – Second Proposed LDP*
- Planning Committee Report – Town Centre Guidance*
- Planning guidance*
- Pre-application advice*
- Processing agreements*
- Proposed Local Development Plan*
- Proposed Local Development Plan – June 2015 Committee Report*
- Quartermile – development on the ground*
- SDP1 Housing Land Supplementary Guidance*
- St Andrew Square – development on the ground*
- St James Quarter redevelopment*
- Scottish Quality Awards 2014*
- Second Proposed Action Programme June 2014*
- Strategic Development Plan for SE Scotland*
- Trees webpage*
- Validation Guidance*
- Webcasting*
- West Edinburgh Landscape Framework*

Part 4

Service Improvements 2015-16

In the coming year we will:

Priority	Performance Framework Indicator	Action/Target
Placemaking	National Headline Indicators: Local Development Plan	Adopt the Proposed LDP by end of March 2016.
Placemaking	High Quality Development on the Ground	Promote our placemaking role to put Planning and Building Standards at the heart of placemaking across the City.
Customer	Communication, Engagement and Customer Service	Prepare and implement a Customer Engagement strategy and new Customer Service Charter
Customer	Communication, Engagement and Customer Service	Refresh and review Edinburgh Planning Concordat
Customer	Communication, Engagement and Customer Service	Produce a Building Standards scorecard using the relevant Scottish Government template to show how we have met the quarterly performance targets, verifier standards and address key themes as part of Building Standards National Framework.
Performance	High Quality Development on the Ground	90% of approved major developments within the year to show added value quality improvements
Performance	Efficient and Effective Decision making	90% of householder applications determined within 2 months
Performance	Efficient and Effective Decision making	75% of non-householder applications determined within 2 months
Performance	Efficient and Effective Decision making	75% of Listed Building Consent applications determined within 2 months
Performance	Efficient and Effective Decision making	Seek to minimise the overall average time taken to grant a building warrant measured from the date of lodging to the date of granting the warrant.
Performance	Efficient and Effective Decision making	Building Warrant Applications – 90% of first reports issued within 20 days
Performance	Effective Management Structures	Review the implementation of Manager Assimilation Action Plans identifying areas where further training and support is needed to manage the service and champion corporate values.
Performance	Culture of Continuous Improvement	Lean Reviews of Statutory Processes to pinpoint areas for improved service delivery
Partnership	High Quality Development on the Ground	Set out the vision for the Edinburgh City Region via SESPLAN and ensure engagement includes young people
Partnership	Communication, Engagement and Customer Service	Promote our collaborative approach with other service areas by implementing a range of joint working initiatives including new and refreshed working protocols and service level agreements.
Partnership	Open for Business	Customer First –E-Building Standards Project delivered in line with Scottish Government milestones

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2014-15

Priority 1 Key Performance Results

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK INDICATOR	INDICATOR	Target 2014/15	End of Year Summary
High Quality Development on the Ground	% of approved major developments within the year to show added value quality improvements	90%	Performance is above target and illustrates the emphasis on placemaking
Efficient and Effective Decision making	% of Listed Building Consent applications determined within 2 months	75%	Performance whilst above target, does indicate a downward trend.
National Headline Indicators: Local Development Plan	Report 2nd Proposed LDP to 12 June 2014 Planning Committee, for approval; if approved, publish for representations during August and September and report to Committee by end of March 2015.	31 Mar 2015	The report was prepared on schedule, and will be published by Committee in May 2015.

Priority 2 Customer Results

Improve the Customer experience	Develop an improvement plan in relation to customer experience, identify and implement improvements, monitor progress and report, following the publication of the results of the Building Standards Department led national customer survey	The customer survey was conducted by an external agency acting on behalf of Scottish Government. CEC's Building Standards division fully co-operated with the requirement to undertake the survey electronically. The Customer Survey was published by Scottish Government in August 2014. An improvement plan is currently being prepared as part of the Customer 1st project and by reviewing Building Standards verification processes and administration support.
Improve the Customer experience	Produce an action plan and implementation programme for all customer contact channels. To be integrated with the Pre-Application project under the Customer 1st banner.	The Customer 1st project Initiation document was agreed in December 2014 and the project team has prepared a draft engagement strategy for presentation to Planning Committee in June 2015. The Council's Organise to Deliver under the BOLD programme and particularly the need to progress the Channel Shift agenda has led to a rethink of how we intend to deliver our PBS service and this has led to a delay. The project will not be delivered in the 2014/15 service plan year as it is clear that more extensive changes will be needed to provide customer service which is fit for purpose.

Communication and Engagement	Review and implement joint working protocols with other service areas to improve communications and efficiency including Estates, Economic Development, Culture and Sport, Flooding and Planning, Transport and Edinburgh World Heritage.	<p>Work is completed on reviewing the working protocol with Estates and Economic Development. The World Heritage Protocol has been completed. However, other protocols have been delayed due to the change management programme and the priorities around getting the new service structure into place.</p> <p>Work is now progressing well with the Flooding and Planning Protocol and the Environmental Assessment and Planning protocol. The Culture and Sport protocol has been delayed waiting from feedback from that service area. A review of the Planning and Transport protocol will be started on the completion of those above but was not achieved in the 2014/15 service plan period</p>
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Priority 3 Community Results

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK INDICATOR	ACTION	Note
Communication and Engagement	Complete a review of the main digital communications including Planning News, the Planning Blog, and Twitter with a view to widening access	Now complete. The proposed Communication strategy now comes under the Customer 1st project and will be reported to Planning Committee in June 2015. Channel shift is now our top priority in making customer service changes.
More attractive public places	Create more attractive places by finalising the Street Design Guidance, reviewing the Public Realm Strategy and the Area Development Frameworks and launching the Royal Mile Retail Strategy	Extended consultation for Street design guidance completed. However, programme rescheduled to meet August Planning Committee. Review process for public realm strategy agreed by Streetscape Delivery Group. Review of ADF on hold. Various strands of retail strategy being taken forward including consideration of a bye law to control presentation of goods on pavement.
Communication and Engagement	Engage with young people in a range of projects including: 100 years of Planning in Edinburgh, the town centre supplementary guidance and the reviews of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Area Development Frameworks	100 years of Planning was the focus for our young planners initiative: Heriots Junior School has been involved in the review of the Inverleith CACA. Planning was involved in World at Work event at Firhill High School with all the catchment primary schools.
High Quality Development on the Ground	Review 'design' in the planning process integrating the added value framework and the Environmental quality Indicators	Placemaking workshops arranged for Feb. Review of Development Briefs undertaken. The Quality Indicators being taken forward with new sites for all four neighbourhood areas identified by end March. Added value process needs to be revised and will be taken forward next year.

Communication and Engagement	Pursue the integration of spatial planning and community planning at city-wide and neighbourhood levels	<p>Actions were completed in a different way. The NLCPs were prepared and launched on 28 October.</p> <p>However the LDP was taken to the Edinburgh Partnership Board and presentations were given to Neighbourhood Partnerships. This interaction with Neighbourhood Partnerships is ongoing.</p>
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Priority 4 People Results

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK INDICATOR	ACTION	Note
Effective Management Structures	Implement a programme of management development skills to allow managers to lead the service and champion corporate values	Management review: manager recruitment completed and implemented on 1 Oct. They were then briefed and engaged in the subsequent team allocations which were fully operational on 27 Oct. Change management programme included managers induction workshop for all new managers and was followed up by selective training on impact and influencing skills. Manager Assimilation completed by end February.
Continuous Improvement	Improved staff training	The majority of staff (excluding new or temporary staff) have completed their staff development hours on target. More tailored sessions to meet the needs of support staff is required.
Continuous Improvement	To implement the culture of continuous improvement by delivering a programme of training and workshops.	The service delivered a programme of new manager training following on from the service changes. Customer 1st workshops for all staff were also delivered. A benefits realisation plan is now in preparation to measure how the changes will lead to a culture of continuous improvement.

Part 5

Official Statistics

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

Category	Total number of decisions 2014-2015	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2014-2015	2013-2014
Major developments	13 excluding PPAs	26.5 excluding PPAs	27.9 excluding PPAs
Local developments (non- householder)	844	11.6	10.7
• Local: less than 2 months	58.4%	7.1	7
• Local: more than 2 months	41.6%	17.7	17.7
Householder developments	1377	7.7	7.5
• Local: less than 2 months	90.3%	7	6.9
• Local: more than 2 months	9.7%	14.2	12.3
Housing developments			
Major	9	28.7	32.5
Local housing developments	206	13.2	14.1
• Local: less than 2 months	52.4%	7.2	7.3
• Local: more than 2 months	47.6%	19.9	21.4
Business and industry			
Major	0		
Local business and industry	68	9.8	8.7
• Local: less than 2 months	66.2%	7.1	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	33.8%	15.1	14.8
EIA developments	1	26.3	15.3
Other consents*	1314	7.4	7.4
Planning/legal agreements**			
• Major: average time	7	29.8	33.4
• Local: average time	37	32.5	23.7
Local reviews	77	7.1	6.4

* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & 8 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Original decision upheld				
	Total number of decisions	2014-2015		2013-2014	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	77	77	51.9	75	62.7
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	67	67	56.7	56	71.4

C: Enforcement activity

	2014-2015	2013-2014
Cases taken up	764	779
Breaches identified	Not recorded	Not recorded
Cases resolved	Not recorded	Not recorded
Notices served***	50	34
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

*** Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices.

D: Context

Edinburgh continues to embed a culture of processing agreements when dealing with major applications. As the national headline indicators show, we have been very successful in improving performance on meeting processing agreement target dates and providing confidence for the development industry.

The performance on the remaining major applications has also shown a slight improvement and we hope to improve this further with more proactive action when cases are delayed because the applicant has not concluded the legal agreement.

In terms of local developments, there has been a slight decline in performance, apart from new housing, as a result of the increase in the number of applications. This is being addressed through workforce planning and recruitment.

Performance in dealing with other consents such as listed building consent and advert consent has remained static from last year. Legal agreements on major applications are being concluded quicker although they are taking longer for local developments. We deal with a number of applications to discharge or modify planning obligations and out of 17 this year, 10 have been granted showing how we approach contributions flexibly when we can.

Local reviews are taking slightly longer and a greater proportion is being overturned than last year. The appeal success rate has also dropped. The reasons for this are unclear.

Enforcement activity has decreased slightly. Edinburgh has a culture of trying to resolve breaches rather than serve notices. In many cases the breach is so minor that action is not justified. This is in line with Government guidance. Without definitive criteria on what 'resolved' means, we have been unable to capture this information but intend to look at this again in 2015-16.

Part 6

Workforce and Financial Information

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service			1	3

Note: Tier 1 = Chief Executive, Tier 2 = Directors, Tier 3 = Heads of Service, Tier 4 = Managers

		City Wide	East	West	Other
Managers	No. Posts	6	5	5	
	Vacant	0	0	0	
Main grade posts	No. Posts	36	22	23	2
	Vacant	4	3	2	1
Technician	No. Posts	6	3	3	
	Vacant	0	0	0	
Office Support/ Clerical	No. Posts	4	8	8	2
	Vacant	0	2	2	0
Total		56	43	43	

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	16
30-39	51
40-49	54
50 and over	52

Committee & Site Visits*	Number per year
Full council meetings	12
Planning committees	7
Area committees (where relevant)	24
Committee site visits	34
LRB**	17
LRB site visits	9

Notes: *References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.

** this relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.

	Total Budget	Costs (actual)		Income***
		Direct*	Indirect**	
Development Management	1613222	2807408	554983	2202511
Development Planning	2139042	1901428	153098	64230
Other	812473	289338	523135	11078
Total	4564737	4998174	1231216	2277819

Notes:

*Direct staff costs covers gross par (including overtime, national insurance and superannuation contribution). The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs, irrespective of what department they are allocated to (for example, legal advice, administration, typing). Exclude staff spending less than 30% of their time on planning.

**Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to the planning service. Examples (not exhaustive) include accommodation, IT, stationery, office equipment, telephone charges, printing, advertising, travel & subsistence, apportionment of support service costs.

*** Include fees from planning applications and deemed applications, and recharges for advertising costs etc. Exclude income from property and planning searches.

Appendix 1

Performance Markers Report 2013-14

Name of planning authority: **City of Edinburgh Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Developments Average timescales have improved significantly from last year going from 81.6 weeks to 27.9 weeks which is better than the national average of 53.8 weeks. RAG = Green. Local (Non-Householder) Developments Average timescales have slightly increased since last year going from 10.5 weeks to 10.7 weeks. However, this remains better than the national average of 14.3 weeks. Figures are based upon 'All Applications' timescale, not post-August 2009 figures as provided in the report. RAG = Amber Householder Developments Average timescales have increased since last year from 6.9 weeks to 7.5 weeks however, this remains better than the national average of 7.7 weeks. RAG = Amber <p>TOTAL RAG = Amber</p>
2	Processing agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>Offer of processing agreements for major and local developments is already well established practice. Increase in use for major applications from 25 to 46 is noted, along with increase in use for local developments.</p> <p>Full guidance on processing agreements available on website.</p>

3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and • clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	Amber	<p>23.5% of applications reported as having been subject to pre-application advice and as data is now collected this is a more accurate figure than last year.</p> <p>Pre-application advice to developers and landowners through a single point of contact.</p> <p>Report lacks detail of how early collaboration with applicants and consultees ensures that clear and proportionate requests for supporting information are achieved.</p> <p>The authority is progressing a pre-application advice project which focuses on how the service will be delivered. The report highlights that this will ensure that information requests are proportionate. Details of progress should be included in the next report.</p>
4	<p>Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period) 	Green	<p>Good progress made in reducing decision making timescales for applications subject to legal agreements since the last reporting period. This is especially the case for major application timescales which have been reduced from 99 weeks to 33.4 weeks (Scottish average 87.5 weeks); Local applications have also been reduced from 35.1 weeks to 25.7 weeks (Scottish average 66.1 weeks).</p> <p>Report highlights that the authority have been withdrawing applications where legal agreements have not been concluded, but they do not support process of limiting the timescale for conclusion, preferring to negotiate for as long as is reasonable.</p> <p>Legal agreements are discussed at an early stage on major developments to ensure that applicants are clear about requirements.</p>
5	<p>Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years</p>	Green	<p>Enforcement charter now fully up to date.</p>
6	<p>Continuous improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	<p>Good progress made on reducing timescales for major applications. Slight increases in timescales for local (non-householder) and householder applications, but these remain better than the Scottish average.</p> <p>Further increase in use of processing agreements and good proportion of applications subject to pre-application discussions (23.5%).</p>

			<p>The main concern is that the LDP is not on course for replacement within 5 year requirement, as it is due to be adopted in February 2016.</p> <p>Enforcement charter now up-to-date. Good progress made on the majority of service improvement commitments, with some exceeding targets.</p> <p>Ambitious and relevant commitments identified for the next reporting period, which will contribute to continuous improvement.</p>
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Amber	<p>Local Plan (covering most of authority area) is 4 years old, but local plan for remaining area is 8 years old.</p> <p>The emerging LDP has been produced within a professional project management framework.</p> <p>LDP due to be adopted in February 2016, so will be over the 5 year time requirement in the next report. Current report highlights that LDP timescales have been delayed by approximately 1 year due to SDP requirement to prepare supplementary planning guidance.</p>
8	<p>Development plan scheme – next LDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Red	<p>Local plans will be 9 and 6 years old by the time LDP is adopted in February 2016.</p> <p>It is noted that the report attributes delays in LDP timescales to SDP (SESplan) requirement to prepare supplementary planning guidance. However, the authority has a key role in the production and content of SESplan.</p>
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
10	<p>Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i></p> <p><i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i></p>	N/A	

<p>11</p>	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information required to support applications; and • expected developer contributions 	<p>Amber</p>	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information required to support applications <p>Guidance for pre-application, processing agreements and a range of development types is published and made available on the authority's website.</p> <p>Report highlights that requests for additional information requirements are individually assessed by planning officers to see whether they are necessary. Future reports would benefit from more detail of how this is delivered in practice and how policy advice ensures that information required to support applications is proportionate.</p> <p>RAG = Amber</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected developer contributions <p>SPG on developer contributions and affordable housing updated in February 2014. Report sets out that contributions only required where they are necessary, proportionate or directly related to the impact of the development. Report also highlights the role of the Proposed LDP Action Programme in estimating costs of essential infrastructure, identifying funding sources and specifying funding gaps.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>TOTAL RAG = Amber</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Good evidence of corporate approach to service delivery, particularly through the One Door Approach to Consents.</p> <p>Concordat signed between the Council, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils which promotes collaboration between all parties to assist with the delivery of major developments.</p> <p>Commencing a review of all customer contact channels with a view to improving the customer experience and making efficiencies where possible.</p>

13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	Participation in benchmarking group with other cities and participation in planning management liaison meetings aimed at sharing good practice. Also took part in Aligning Consents looking at integrating road construction consent and planning permission processes.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	<p>Further reduction in legacy cases with 63% of old cases being removed from the system during the reporting period. This exceeds 2013-14 service improvement commitment target (25%).</p> <p>Future reports need to provide details of the actual number of legacy cases removed and the number remaining.</p>
15	<p>Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions 	Green	<p>Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in the development plan (and/or emerging plan); <p>LDP still to be adopted, but report clearly describes the role of the LDP Action Programme and sets out that contributions will only be required where necessary. Updated non-statutory guidance on developer contributions and affordable housing was published during the reporting period.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in pre-application discussions <p>Report clearly demonstrates the promotion and value of pre-application discussion. Evidence provided includes examples of actions the Council has taken to stall sites through their 'Edinburgh 12' initiative. This includes a co-ordination group to provide pre-application advice to developers and landowners and highlights issues around infrastructure costs and timings, developer contributions and unaffordable s75 contributions.</p> <p>Future reports would benefit though from more specific details or case study examples of how clear and proportionate expectations for developer contributions have been set out in pre-application discussions.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>TOTAL RAG - Green</p>

