

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL : A PLAN FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2010

Overview

Planning Authorities are at the cusp of delivering planning reform which is recognised as essential to increasing sustainable economic growth in Scotland. NAC has statutory responsibility for plan making and the determination of applications under the Town & Country Planning legislation. NAC has adopted new ways of working to improve the efficiency of the planning system, and intends to build on these to become more effective.

Key Priorities

- Providing up to date development plans in support of a speedier, plan led, more democratic and more enabling regime;
- Focusing resources on Major Applications and Consultation of Strategic Importance to the Council and the Government;
- Utilising fully the Government led initiative "E-Planning" to make Development Management and the Local Development Plan more accessible and efficient; and
- Working in partnership with Irvine Bay URC, Ayrshire & Arran Health Board and the private sector to deliver better development in the right places and to stimulate economic regeneration.

The Local Development Plan Main Issues Report currently in consultation has been developed in the context of strategies including the Council's Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government, the Local Housing Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy. The LDP will strive to support SOA outcomes, retain a stable population, promote new and existing business growth, provide for Regeneration and improve infrastructure and the environment.

The Planning Service will restructure its staff resources to meet the Key Priorities of its core business in line with the Council's "Right Sizing" approach.

Local Members continue to be closely involved in planning reform and are supportive in terms of the time that they are prepared to dedicate to planning and the financial resource that they have allocated to the key components of the Local Development Plan; E-Planning and the new Governance arrangements.

What We Have Done (March 2009 to March 2010)

Towards an Efficient Planning Service

- Established a Local Development Plan Committee for the delivery of local planning
- Published a Development Plan Scheme and monitored progress against it.
- Worked with Housing Services on Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Land Supply
- Reviewed and revised existing Local Government Act Scheme of Delegation; agree terms of new statutory S36A scheme for local planning applications; agreed structure of Local Review Body; agreed which NAC Committee will conduct pre-determination hearings for major applications not in accordance with the Development Plan and determine them.

- Reviewed all existing forms, guidance notes etc to reflect all the new procedures including the review and update of the Uniform system to enable it to meet the requirements of the new procedures, in collaboration with CAPS Uniform staff.
- Trained staff in new Development Management and Enforcement procedures.

Inclusive Process

- Established 5 Area Forums towards consolidation of a local Forum for Planning
- Adopted new techniques for engagement on Local Development Plan with different groups including Members and the Public, and the Youth Council
- Worked in partnership with the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and private sector regeneration initiatives.
- Supported and developed the Outdoor Access Forum including the Core Paths Plan
- Held stakeholder engagement meetings on the introduction of E-Planning
- Alerted stakeholders and elected members to new procedures, and culture change.
- Trained Members on new LRB system
- Membership of HOPS Executive and DM Sub Committee to respond to the new Act

Fit for Purpose

- Undertook training with Members to improve the democratic element of plan making.
- Ensured that the LDP MIR incorporated the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement in land use and development terms
- Participated in a Business Change project funded by the Scottish Government

Delivering Sustainable Development

- Established an LDP process integrating SEA, linked with economic and social assessment

Customer Feedback

Feedback identified the following points:-

- The 5 Area forums on the LDP MIR were viewed as constructive and useful.
- Members considered the facilitator led debates a major contribution to their input to the LDP.
- Partnership working to deliver economic regeneration was recognised as essential to driving forward change.
- Close working with the Outdoor Access forum has eased the delivery process through collective ownership of the plan
- Stakeholder engagement in E-planning has brought above average response to the use of the system.

What We Will Do (March 2010 – March 2011)

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Completed By	Monitor June	Monitor December
Towards an Efficient Planning Service					
To prepare and adopt a new Local Development Plan	Up to date Statutory Local Development Plan		December 2012		
To review the function and operation of the Ayrshire Joint Planning Unit	To focus resources on core business and value	15b	March 2011		
To monitor the effective operation of new schemes of delegation, local review body and NAC's role in major applications and modify as required	To deliver effective and efficient structures and processes conforming to the principles and legal requirements of Planning Reform	15a 15b	March 2011		
To re-assemble the Planning Service in a single location	To facilitate optimum communication and integration of Development Management and Development Plans	15b	April 2010		
To review current service structures aligning these with the principles of Planning Reform, the priority for regeneration and corporate business change objectives.	Revised structure completed by August 2010	15b 15c	August 2010		
To pursue staff development, recruitment and retention commensurate with resources and opportunity	To develop specialist skills in-house and build capacity and competency where possible through a programme of inter-agency and planning authority training	15b	March 2011		
To form benchmarking group with other Local Authority DMs	To deliver effective and efficient structures and processes	15a 15b	August 2010		

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Completed By	Monitor June	Monitor December
To work with Agencies to front load their involvement in the new Local Development Plan	To ensure effective policy guidance is imbedded	15c	December 2012		
To increase the take-up and use of E-planning through further user forums	To improve delivery and performance	15b	March 2011		
To consolidate consistent minimum quality standards for planning applications through planning guidance	To improve delivery and efficiency	15b	March 2011		
Inclusive Process					
To establish a local forum for planning	To provide stakeholder involvement	11a	January 2011		
To continue to investigate and adopt new techniques for engagement on the Local Development Plan	Customer focus in the LDP process	11a	December 2012		
To continue to engage with the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and other private sector regeneration initiatives.	Partnership working to deliver economic regeneration	2, 15c	Ongoing		
Fit for Purpose					
To examine opportunities for Member training and to commit Members and Officers to meetings with the Scottish Government to disseminate issues, examine solutions and broaden communication.	Improved democratic engagement in planning.				

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Completed By	Monitor June	Monitor December
To continue to ensure that the Local Development Plan incorporates the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement in land use and development terms	Delivery of the planning components of the SOA	1c, 6e, 10b, 12a, 15c			
To review the Enforcement Charter	To deliver Enforcement in line with the provisions of the new Act		August 2010		
To investigate the use of OCR within ePlanning	To improve delivery and performance		August 2010		
Delivering Sustainable Development					
To continue the integrated LDP and SEA processes in plan production linked with economic and social assessment	Sustainability is fully integrated in the LDP	12	December 2012		

Statement on Monitoring

Monitoring statement for previous year's Service Improvement Plan attached.

**NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL: A PLAN FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT
MONITORING STATEMENT FOR MARCH 2009- MARCH 2010**

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Summary

Planning Authorities are at the cusp of delivering planning reform which is seen as essential to increasing sustainable economic growth in Scotland. NAC has statutory responsibility for plan making and the determination of applications under the Town & Country Planning legislation. NAC has recently been examining new ways of working to improve the efficiency of the planning system, in particular:-

- Providing up to date development plans in support of a speedier, plan led, more democratic and more enabling regime;
- Focusing resources on matters of greatest significance to the Council and the Government;
- Engaging fully with the Government led initiative to introduce "E-Planning" to make Development Management more accessible and efficient; and
- Working in partnership with Irvine Bay URC, Ayrshire & Arran Health Board and others to deliver better development in the right places and to stimulate economic regeneration.

In light of this work, NAC is now taking the following active steps:-

- To proceed immediately with a local development plan, heralded by a development plan scheme and issues report and to integrate plan production with strategic environmental assessment;
- To embark on new governance arrangements for Local Development Plan production and Development Management to ensure a democratic approach to change that is consistent with the long term public and community interest while at the same time supporting the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and the principles of Planning Reform;
- Launching the E-Planning system in conjunction with statutory and non statutory consultees;
- Resourcing a business change project to help identify the scope of improved ways of working in practice;
- Committing members and officers to meetings with the Scottish Government to disseminate issues with the new system; discuss solutions and broaden communication;
- To pursue staff development, recruitment and retention commensurate with resources and opportunity.

All this activity is being co-ordinated and driven forward against a background of legislative change and limited management resources. Local Members have been closely involved in planning reform and have been supportive in terms of the time that they are prepared to dedicate to planning and the financial resource that they have allocated to the key components of the Local Development Plan and E-Planning.

Service Improvement Plan

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Complete By	Monitor 12/06	Monitor 11/12
Towards an Efficient Planning Service					
To prepare and adopt a new Local Development Plan	Up to date Statutory Local Development Plan		December 2012	Green	Green
To establish a Local Development Plan Committee for the delivery of local planning	Enhanced Democratic Involvement		March 2009	Established on time	-
To publish a Development Plan Scheme and to ensure it is reviewed at least annually	Programme for Stakeholder Engagement		31 March 2009	Completed on time	-
To develop specialist topics through the Joint Planning Unit to align actions and policies of the three Ayrshire Councils	Input to LDP, Strategic Plans and Development Management		December 2010	Green	Green
To work with Housing Services on Housing Need and Land Supply	Inform Housing Provision generally and Social Housing in particular	10b	May/June 2009	Amber – One month over-run expected	Red
To review and revise existing Local Government Act Scheme of Delegation; agree terms of new statutory S36A scheme for local planning applications; agree structure of Local Review Body; agree which Committee will conduct pre-determination hearings of representations for major applications not in accordance with the Development Plan and to agree the	To deliver effective and efficient structures and processes conforming to the principles and legal requirements of Planning Reform	15b	April/May 2009	Review Bodies Report prepared for June Council Scheme of Delegation completed on time	-

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Complete By	Monitor 12/06	Monitor 11/12
mechanism for Full council to deal with applications for significant departures					
Review all existing forms, guidance notes etc to reflect all the new procedures including the review and update of the Uniform system to enable it to meet the requirements of the new procedures, in collaboration with CPS Uniform staff.	To ensure back-office processes and documentation is clear and consistent with Planning Reform	15b	April – July 2009	Amber – SG advice outstanding	Complete
Train staff in new Development Management and Enforcement procedures and consider whether any changes to staffing structures would be desirable.	To develop skills and ensure consistency and efficiency of processes		February – July 2009	Amber – SG advice outstanding	Complete
Inclusive Process					
To establish a local Forum for Planning	To provide Stakeholder Involvement		Jan 2011	Green	Green
To adopt different techniques for engagement on Local Development Plan and Development Management with different groups including Members and the Public, including the Youth Council	Engagement in the LDP		Dec 2012	Green – CC Toolkit Young Scot Pod	Green
To engage in the Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and other local initiatives	Partnership working to deliver economic regeneration	15c	Ongoing	Green	Green
To service and develop the Outdoor Access Forum	Stakeholder engagement in the Core Paths Plan and its delivery	6e	To launch the Core Paths Plan April 2009	Completed on time	-

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Complete By	Monitor 12/06	Monitor 11/12
Arrange for stakeholder engagement meetings on the introduction of E-Planning	The promotion of E-Planning to stakeholder groups		March/April 2009	Completed on time	-
Alert stakeholders and elected members to new procedures, advance culture change issues with them, and inform and consult them regarding any matters where there is potential flexibility in the new procedures.	To agree on priorities and proportionate involvement reflecting stakeholder performance expectations.	15a	April – July 2009	Green	Complete
Fit for Purpose					
To undertake training with Members and support the Local Development Plan Committee in undertaking all processes required to prepare a LDP	Improve the democratic element of plan making.		December 2012	Green	Green
To ensure the LDP incorporates the objectives of the Single Outcome Agreement in land use and development terms	Delivery of the Planning components of the SOA	1c 6e 10b 12a15 c	December 2012	Green	Green
To participate in a Business Change project funded by the Scottish Government	Identification of improved ways of working in practice, including effective and proportionate engagement with public sector bodies		Completed by June 2009	Amber over-run to August agreed	Amber over-run to December agreed
To agree Council response to Householder Permitted Development Consultation	Input to SG Consultation		April 2009	Consultation expired No Council input	-
Delivering Sustainable Development					

Actions	Output	SOA Ref	Complete By	Monitor 12/06	Monitor 11/12
To establish an LDP process with SEA linked with economic and social assessment	Sustainability is fully integrated in the LDP		December 2012	Green	Green

Note: DM and the LDP contributes to a number of the general SOA outcomes:

Living in well designed, sustainable places with access to amenities and services (10)

An attractive place to do business (1) and realise economic potential (2)

Valuing, enjoying and protecting our built and natural environment (12)