

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE 1 JUNE 2010**

**SUBJECT: PLANNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**BY: HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a draft of a Planning Improvement Plan, which is required by the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of section D(1) of the Council's Administrative Scheme.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee agrees the Planning Improvement Plan, and its submission to the Scottish Government.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Planning Scotland Act (2006) introduced important changes to planning processes. The Scottish Government requires local and national park authorities to carry out a number of tasks in relation to the Planning Act. One requirement is that planning authorities will identify areas for service improvement and how best they be tackled, this process will be repeated on an annual basis. In 2009 this Council did not prepare a Planning Improvement Plan as the Service was undertaking Public Sector Improvement Framework reviews and was implementing ePlanning and the Planning Act. The Service has now prepared a draft Plan which is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Service submits regular reports to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee, and to the Audit and Performance Review Committee. These reports record and comment on statutory indicators and other measures of performance within the various Planning functions. The Service also undertook a PSIF review of Planning Services during 2009, and a number of other matters have arisen during the year which contribute towards the Planning Improvement Plan.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government has advised that Planning Improvement Plans should be concise, they should set out a basic description of the Council's Planning functions, and should concentrate on a small number of activities where the Council will focus its actions and resources over the forthcoming year. The main issues which have been addressed within this Council's draft Plan are those of:-

- The efficiency and speed of determining planning applications.

- Improving the quality of decisions.
- Making best use of the Development Plan to guide development.
- Providing leadership.
- Improving customer service.

#### **4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The proposed Planning Improvement Plan, appendix 1, sets out the Plan proposals in a format which has been accepted, by the Scottish Government, based on the Plans of other Councils. The Plan format is therefore considered to be acceptable for submission to the Scottish Government. The Department will, however, prepare a supplement to the Plan which sets out in more detail the outcomes and milestones for the Plan which can be monitored by the Department to ensure that the plan is implemented and that the outcomes can be measured and monitored. A number of the proposals within the Plan are directly linked to matters which are already reported to Committee in relation to statutory performance indicators or other measures. The majority of the content of the Plan will be monitored by the Service. As the Planning Improvement Plan process is based on an annual review, the Service will provide an annual report to Committee which will record the implementation of the current Plan, and propose the content for the subsequent Plan.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The proposals contribute to the Single Outcome Agreement efficiency and Biomass will help achieve the Scottish Government objective relating to climate change, and the Single Outcome Agreement, they will help the implementation of aspects of the Service Improvement Plan, and the proposals meet the requirements of the Scottish Government in respect of the requirement to prepare a Plan.

##### **(b) POLICY AND LEGAL**

The Planning Improvement Plan is a requirement of the Scottish Government, to complement the implementation of the Planning Act.

##### **(c) RESOURCES (FINANCIAL, RISKS, STAFFING and PROPERTY)**

There are no financial or property resources required to prepare or implement this Plan. All aspects of the Plan will be undertaken within the current staffing resources, which may be adapted to help implement the detailed content of the Plan.

##### **(d) CONSULTATIONS**

Consultation has been undertaken with planning staff.

**6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Service has recognised that a number of matters have to be addressed regarding planning performance and other Planning activities. Committee has been advised regularly on performance and other matters, and been advised of measures which are being undertaken to achieve improvements. The Planning Improvement Plan draws together the various requirements of the Council and the Scottish Government into one Plan.

Author of Report: Stewart Halkett, Head of Development Services

Background Papers: None

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