

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

2021 - 2022

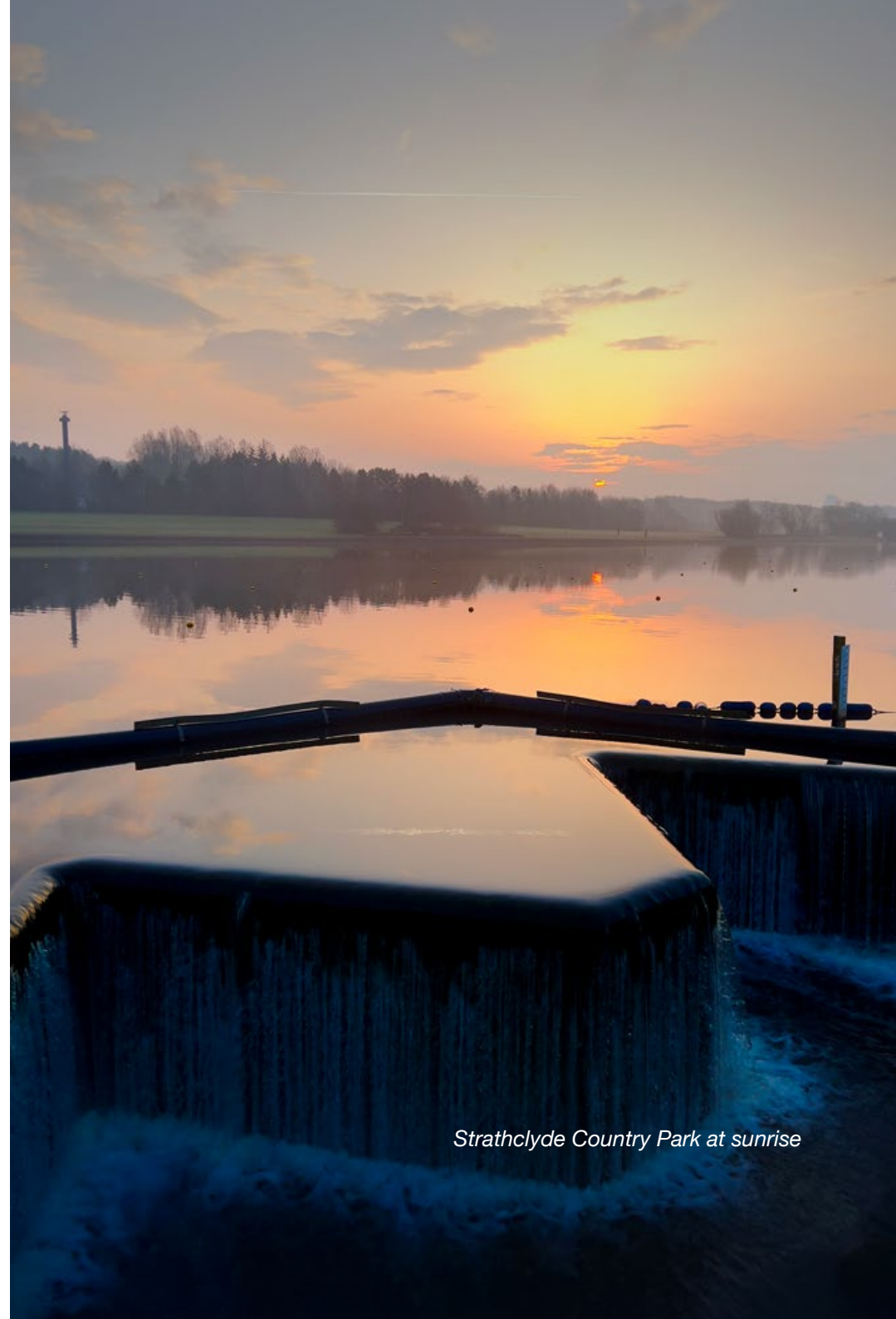




Colzium House, Kilsyth

contents

Introduction	4
North Lanarkshire	5
Part 1: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies	10
• Quality of Outcomes	11
• Quality of Service and Engagement	13
• Governance	17
• Culture of Continuous Improvement	23
• Journey of Improvement	00
Part 2: Supporting evidence	26
Part 3: Service improvements	30
Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHI)	36
Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics	42
Part 6: Workforce Information	46
Part 7: Planning Committee Information	48
Appendix.....	50



Strathclyde Country Park at sunrise

Introduction

We are pleased to provide our eleventh annual performance report on our planning services.

This Planning Performance Framework reports on our performance across a broad range of areas covering the 12 months from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

As well as looking at speed of decision making, we cover other key factors including, quality, workloads, resources, organisation and outcomes. Our case studies demonstrate how we adapted our service delivery during the coronavirus crisis, and how we continued to add value to our communities and contribute to the enhancement of our natural and built environment over this challenging year.

We welcome this opportunity to highlight our achievements, successes and individuality with you, as well as some areas we have identified for improvement.

Strathclyde Country Park



North Lanarkshire

North Lanarkshire is ideally situated in the heart of Scotland with first-rate connectivity to the rest of Scotland, the UK and the world.

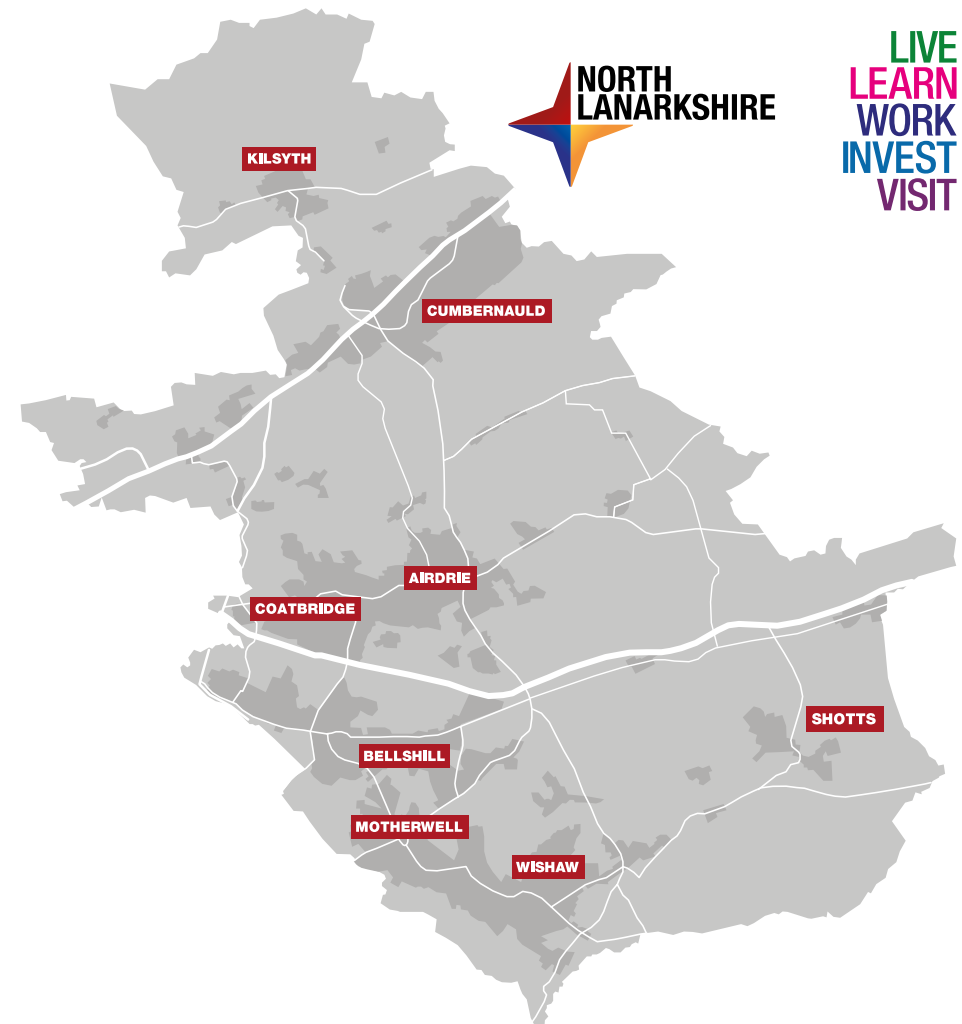
It is Scotland's fourth-largest local authority and with a population of over 340,000.

With eight established town centres, North Lanarkshire forms a geographically diverse area between the conurbation of Glasgow which we border to the west, and the moorlands of central Scotland to the east.

North Lanarkshire's historical development of the coal, steel and heavy engineering industries has resulted in one of the largest areas of vacant and derelict land in Scotland, accounting for 1,363 hectares*. These traditional industries have now largely been replaced by a modern business infrastructure supporting new and emerging sectors.

North Lanarkshire's location and connectivity are some of the many strengths that will help create opportunities which can contribute to supporting economic recovery and growth.

We want North Lanarkshire to be a place where everyone is given equality of opportunity, where individuals are supported, encouraged and cared for at each stage of their life and for North Lanarkshire to be a place where people want to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit.





As we recover from the coronavirus pandemic and face new economic challenges, the commitment to [The Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) remains the same which is to support the shared ambition for inclusive growth and prosperity for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire over the long term.

The Plan is designed to communicate priorities and provide a focus for activities and resources. This aims to ensure we work towards a shared ambition and challenges are addressed through integrated solutions.

To deliver our shared ambition of inclusive growth and prosperity, our five priorities are to:

- Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
- Support all children and young people to realise their full potential
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
- Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base

These five clear corporate priorities set out a strong emphasis on integrated solutions to tackling barriers to growth, unlocking potential and delivering change in a dynamic way that will support growth and deliver broader economic and social benefits for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

The [Coronavirus Recovery Plan for North Lanarkshire](#) highlights some of the ways in which the council has continued to deliver outstanding services throughout the health crisis; and it sets out how it will recover services and the principles at the heart of the recovery process.

[The Place, The Vision](#) sets out the council's ambitions for the area's businesses and its people, boosting the local economy and creating jobs. It aims to invest £3.5 billion over the next 10 years, which, along with private sector inward investment, will create around 12,000 jobs and generate an additional £1 billion for the local economy.

Improving economic regeneration plays a significant part in our shared ambition to make North Lanarkshire the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit. The [Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan](#) (ERDP) provides a framework which aims to co-ordinate the physical and economic regeneration of North Lanarkshire. The four interrelated themes are:

- Housing supply - Increasing housing supply across all tenures to meet current and future housing requirements and support wider regeneration objectives.
- Town centres - Supporting the regeneration of North Lanarkshire's town centres through the development of long-term visions and strategic projects.
- Infrastructure - Developing the strategic infrastructure to support physical and economic regeneration, primarily through the City Deal programme.
- Business and industry - Enabling and promoting the provision of good quality industrial and office space in the right locations to help attract and retain businesses and improve economic output.

The ERDP is supported through a range of projects such as our [Town Visions](#) which aim to encompass the transformation of town centres including proposals to reposition our towns as mixed-use spaces, promoting town centre living and delivering services closer to communities. There will be a much stronger focus on new-build housing, residential conversion and refurbishment.

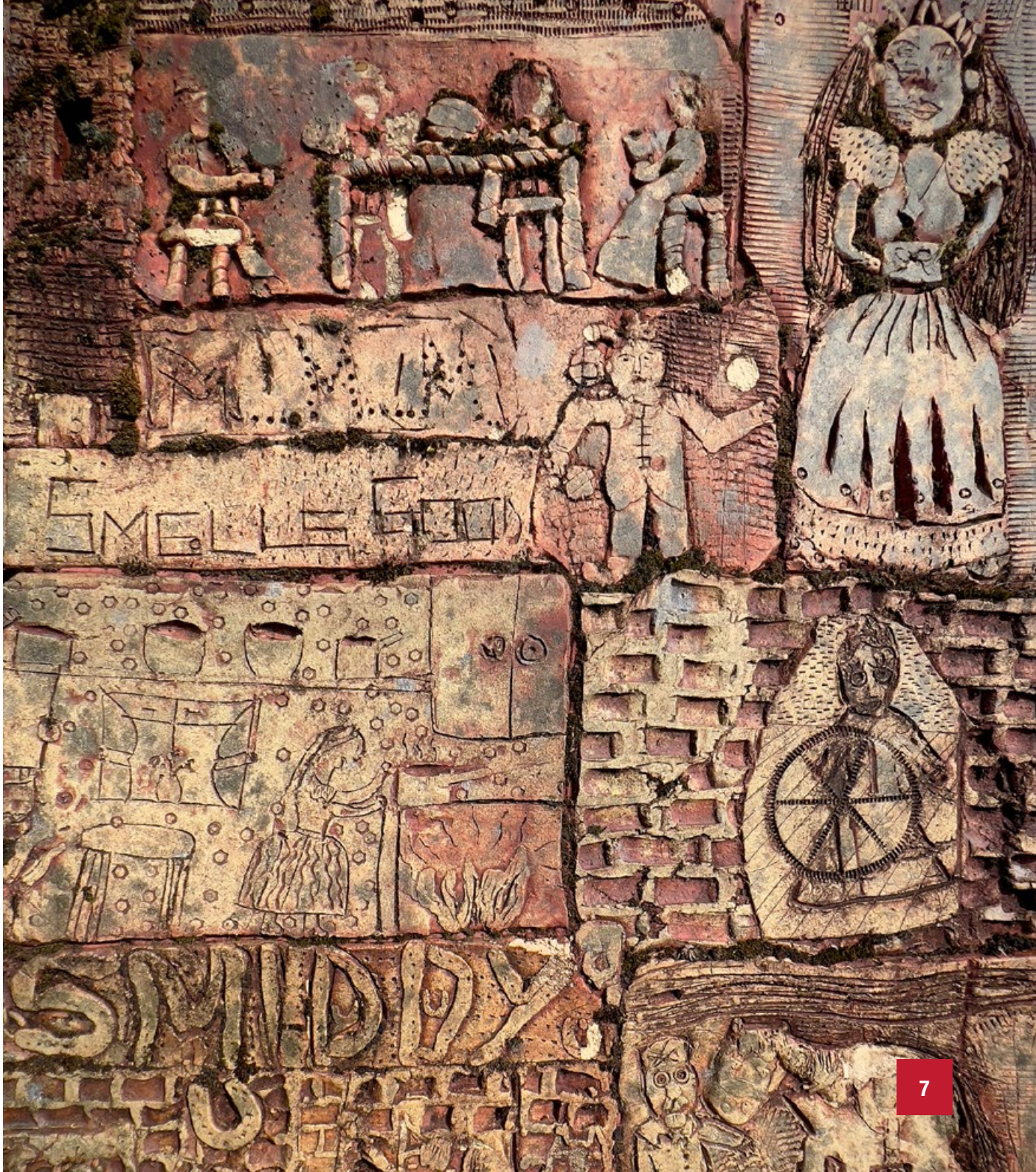
We'll use land no longer needed for retailing and improve town centre access and active travel. We will use our own new supply programme to deliver new affordable homes in town centres.

Our Vision for North Lanarkshire cannot be realised without working with local people and organisations within our communities to shape and develop it.

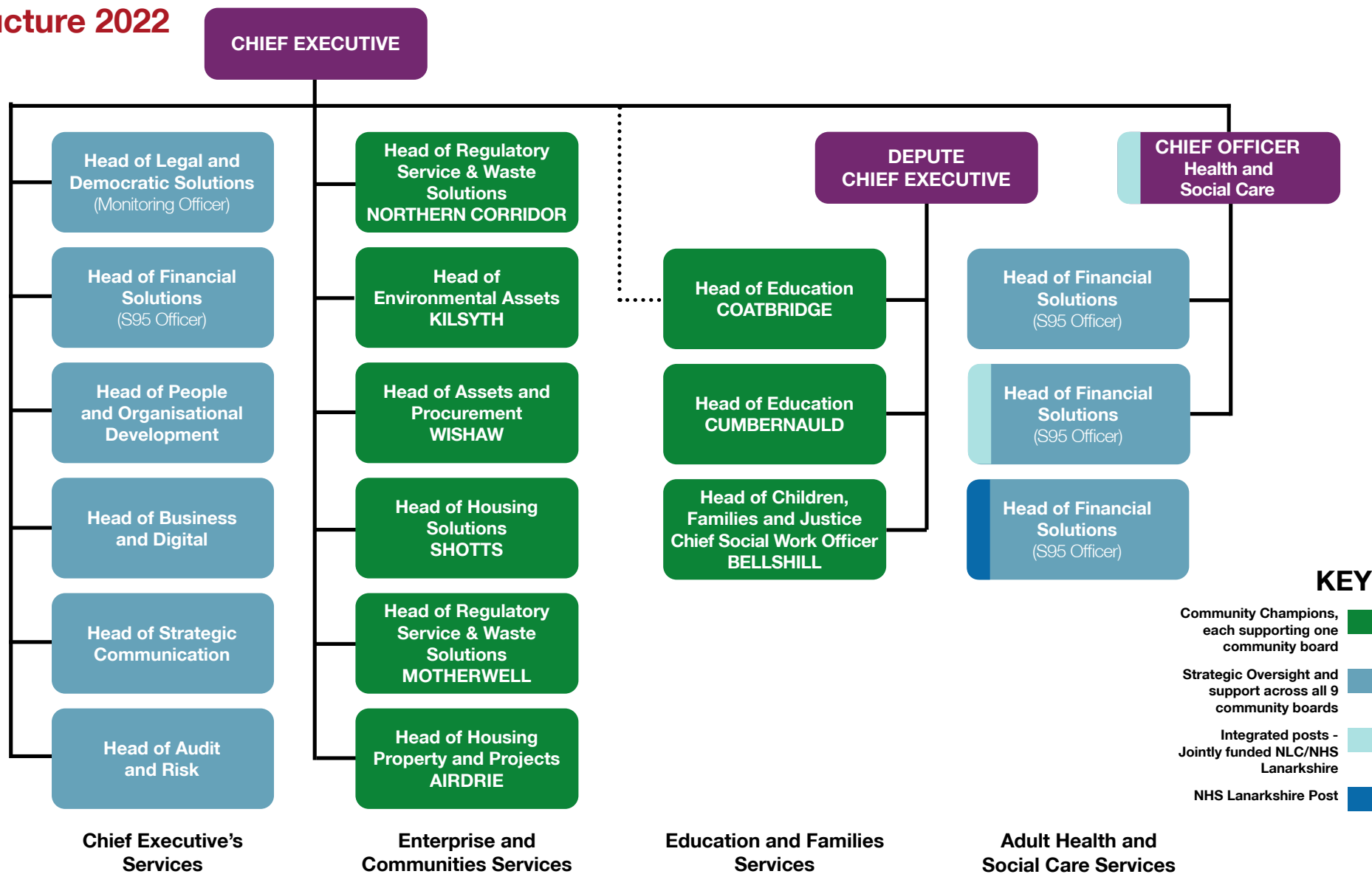
For that reason, the council has established nine [Community Boards](#) that meet several times a year to enhance and support community involvement and provide a single approach for local community-led decision making.

Our Planning and Place team sits within Enterprise and Communities. This service cluster has been aligned to support and enable the delivery of growth in North Lanarkshire and has a central role in the delivery of our priority outcomes. The structure enables us to combine skills and resources to address challenges through integrated solutions, making our areas attractive business locations, improving employment opportunities, encouraging strong sustainable communities, and enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment.

Panel in the Walled Garden, Colzium Estate



Organisational Structure 2022



Further supporting growth in North Lanarkshire is the [Glasgow City Region City Deal](#) which will create economic growth and attract investment by improving transport and regenerating or developing sites over the next 20 years.

The NL City Deal Programme has expanded and the investment in North Lanarkshire has increased from £172.5 million to £240 million. This important change will allow us to focus on delivering the Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor to enable the regeneration of Ravenscraig and the development of the East Airdrie Link Road to achieve wider economic, social and environmental benefits across North Lanarkshire.

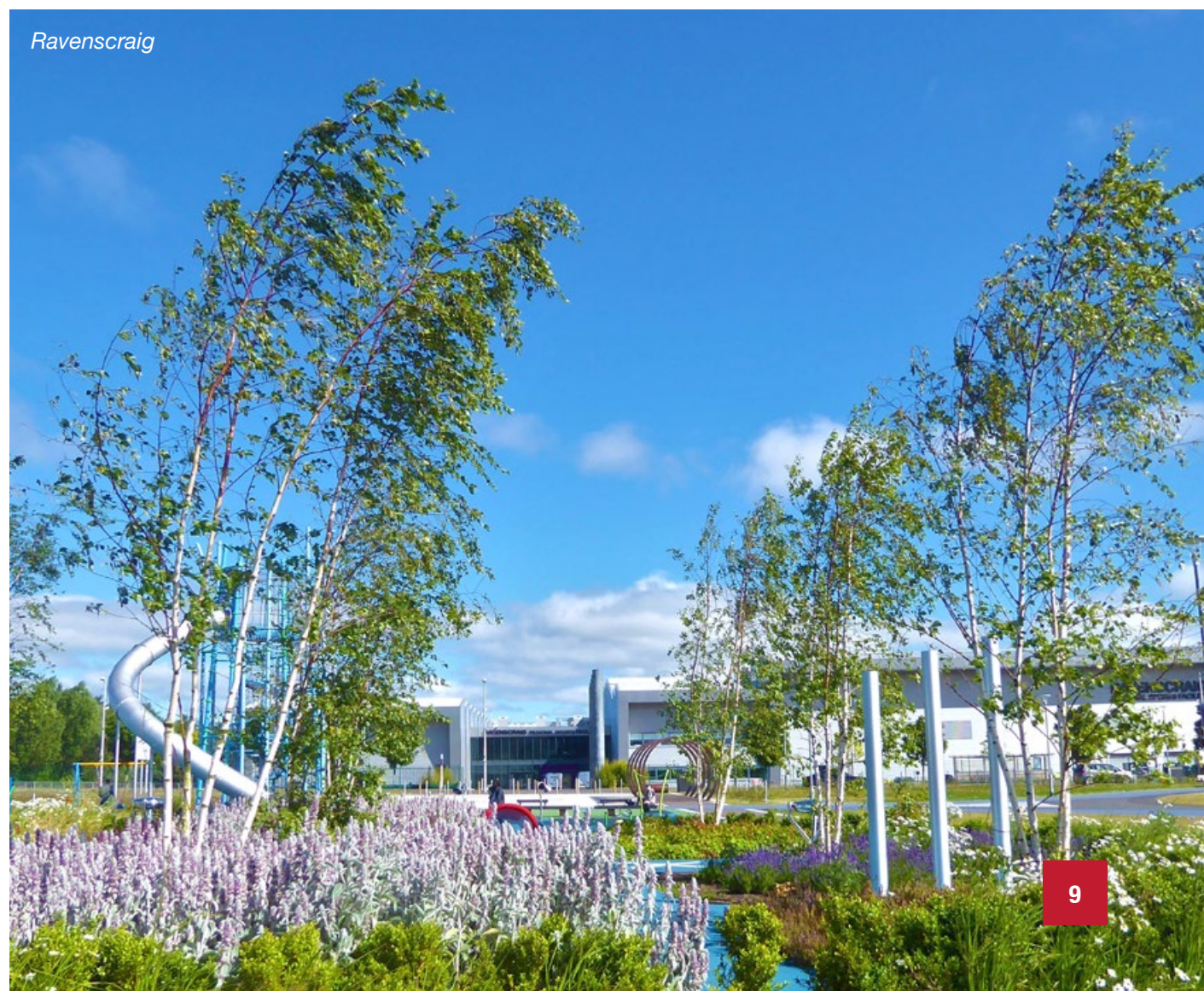
This [infrastructure fund](#) will allow us to provide major road infrastructure to connect communities and place, increase access to businesses locations and employment opportunities and enhance sustainable transport. This project will see £3.5 billion invested over the next 10 years, creating around 12,000 jobs and generating an additional £1 billion for the local economy. The regeneration of the Ravenscraig site is a key element of the council's vision for this project.

As a council, we are making an additional £29.5 million available to support the Ravenscraig road development. Additional NLC capital funding has also been approved to allow for the delivery of the East Airdrie Link Road which collectively will form the Strategic Pan Lanarkshire Orbital Transport Corridor, creating a critical North South link to support economic growth in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire City Deal Programme has three core headline projects:

- [A8/M8 corridor access improvements](#)
- [Glenboig link road](#)
- [Pan-Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor](#)

The core projects comprise a number of sub projects that work together to deliver wider connectivity, transportation improvements and enable economic development.



Part 1: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Glenboig



There are many ways of defining and measuring a high quality planning service. The Scottish Government has asked that we cover our:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Quality of outcomes:

The quality of our outcomes can be demonstrated by analysing the value our planning service adds to development in our area.

We ensure a proactive approach to protecting and enhancing our natural and built environment through our design policies, local plan, development frameworks and by engaging positively with developers before, during and after the application process. **Case Study 1** details how we reached out to housebuilders to explore the challenges and opportunities to deliver the homes we need, create sustainable communities, and improve outcomes for all in North Lanarkshire

Our comprehensive planning policies, guidance and collaborative approach has led to high quality development using innovative design to create comfortable, accessible places to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

We continue with our challenging commitment towards raising standards and achieving quality

change we can be proud of. Our [Local Development Plan](#) will be used to guide development, inform decisions and planning policy for the area. The policies and guidance within, and that evolve from the plan will continue to contribute to the delivery of improved economic opportunities and outcomes for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire through the delivery of high quality development on the ground.

To ensure the plan is effectively implemented, our main focus remains on the continuation of the successful process of urban renewal through town centre regeneration and environmental improvements, including a complementary network of safe, active, attractive and healthier places and spaces by improving the connectivity to and between North Lanarkshire's places and spaces.

Our Masterplanning and the promotion of Ravenscraig, (Scotland's biggest regeneration site and a national development within National Planning Framework 3), contribute to achieving high quality development. **Case Study 2** is an update on the revised regeneration proposals for the former steelworks at Ravenscraig.

Our identified Community Growth Areas (CGA) are locations designated for large scale planned urban expansion, to accommodate the demand for new housing and associated facilities that can't be met in established built up areas.

The [Gartcosh:Glenboig Community Growth Area](#) is an example of where major long term project delivery is now being realised. This work has required co-

operation, co-ordination and planning by landowners, developers, the local authority and other public and private agencies and service providers. It demonstrates how collectively, Scottish Planning Policy, the Strategic and Local Development Plans and Strategic Development Framework has achieved the delivery of both national and local policy on the ground.

[Town Centres](#) are, once again, being increasingly recognised as the core of communities which should be protected, promoted and enhanced. In North Lanarkshire the reshaping and repopulating of our eight town centres so that they become vibrant places with mixed-use spaces which maximise social, economic and environmental opportunities is one of the key objectives of our ERDP.

Our [Town Visions](#) represent a long-term strategy for each town centre with a focus on delivering a broader mix of investment and promoting town centre living so our towns have a sustainable future. With a focus on new residential provision, and protecting and repurposing historic buildings, future work will contribute to a sense of place. By positioning local services within communities, our [Town and Community Hubs](#) will deliver integrated facilities and services to local communities. This place-based investment aims to address the range of different and complex economic, social, and health issues that exist.

Case Study 1 | NLC Developers Forum 'Exploring challenges and opportunities to deliver the homes we need, create sustainable communities, and improve outcomes for all in North Lanarkshire.'

The Developers' Forum was an online event held on 12 November 2021 aimed at developer partners, other key stakeholders and specific council services.

The purpose of the forum was to provide an opportunity for participants to hear more about key developments, shared areas of interest and to discuss the challenges and opportunities to deliver the homes North Lanarkshire needs.

The format of the Forum consisted of a series of short presentations, followed by a workshop discussion. The event was attended by 61 participants in total, including 46 external participants.

The Forum focussed on the wider council ambition to support the local economy by creating new jobs, regenerating local communities and transforming our town centres into vibrant multi-use spaces to make North Lanarkshire the place to live, learn, work invest and visit.

Speakers at the event covered a range of topics including the Local Development Plan and the National Planning Framework 4, employment and skills, the Local Housing Strategy and the council's commitment to achieving net zero.

Workshop discussions provided further opportunity for positive relationship building between the

council, partners and stakeholders and the open discussion allowed the groups to share views, experience and to provide feedback.

Participants are asked to consider key questions and the two aims of the workshop event were:

1. To explore the current and future challenges facing the housebuilding sector, as well as potential opportunities.
2. To identify how we can overcome these challenges through working together and capitalising on the opportunities to deliver the homes North Lanarkshire needs to grow and thrive.

Various challenges were raised and discussed including the issue for developers of labour shortages, the need to bridge skills gaps, material shortages, rising costs and the increased complexity of requirements for planning applications.

The opportunities that arose were the eagerness to engage on the challenges arising and as a result the council is now working with social housing providers, private housing developers and infrastructure providers having service specific meetings and encouraging further dialogue and engagement so that we can work better together to deliver high quality homes and create sustainable communities in North Lanarkshire.

Having discussed National Planning Framework 4 giving a context and setting out how places and environments will be planned and designed in the future helped give insight to developers on the transformation of the planning system.

This helped us understand that not all developers were confident that planning reform would help address current challenges and that an improved understanding of the proposed changes was needed. This valuable feedback will help guide engagement between the planning service and developers in future.

Key Officer: Lorna Bowden



Quality of Service and Engagement:

We are committed to delivering a high-quality planning service in a professional manner that meets the needs and expectations of our customers and stakeholders. Quality of service and engagement has been key to delivering positive change for the people and communities in North Lanarkshire with feedback from customers and staff engagement helping to inform future service delivery

Demonstrating the impact and value of engagement, **Case Study 3** demonstrates how feedback and listening to the people, communities and business in North Lanarkshire resulted in a change to policy that has had a positive impact on the Orchardton Woods area. Having been on the Vacant and Derelict Land Register since 1997, without the direction and input from the community, the site would likely have remained unused and unproductive.

The way we work and deliver our service has changed since the start of the Covid pandemic, however by responding proactively and positively, and by being flexible in our approach, we have ensured we can still deliver our service and meet our customer's needs. We have adapted our processes, updated our protocols and are making use of online platforms and digital solutions available to us.

As our service delivery evolves to fit our new circumstances, we will continue to keep our

customers and stakeholders well informed and offer the best customer service possible. To do so we must communicate effectively to ensure we manage and meet expectation. Our [development management customer charter](#) and our [enforcement charter](#) are regularly reviewed and updated and tell our customers what they can expect and the level of service we strive to provide.

We publish our charters as web pages rather than in PDF format to help us meet our commitment to making online content accessible to people with disabilities, which includes those with impaired vision and motor difficulties. Web pages, unlike documents, are fully accessible to screen readers and people who use a keyboard to navigate a page. Web pages are easy to access for the majority of users who now visit our website using a mobile phone, unlike PDFs which are not designed for small screens. Web page content is also easier to find on the website and provides a wider context than a PDF, which can often be viewed in isolation.

We communicate with customers and stakeholders in a range of ways. These include our website, Govdelivery (an email subscription service with 6800+ subscribers) social media, press and email. Govdelivery has been a valuable tool in keeping customers up to date with the Local Development Plan examination process and will continue to be used to communicate regarding progress.

Our ['Listening to You'](#) customer complaints procedure demonstrates that we value feedback and we

welcome the opportunity to review our service delivery. Our frontline staff are also key to gauging opinion on our service delivery. Having a duty officer means that there is a member of the team available to provide information to customers during officer hours and by listening to informal comments many improvements have been made for customers at all stages of their journey.

Supporting development in North Lanarkshire, we continue to monitor and update our online information. With our website often being the first point of contact for customers, it is important we listen to customers and publish our information in a way that is accessible, easy to find and easy to understand. Striving to achieve this, we gather customer feedback through our 'Is this page useful' section on the website. We also seek feedback from other sources. For example, we engaged with the NL Access Panel regarding the publication of our Planning Performance Framework and the document is now published online in a fully accessible format for customers using screen readers.

Feedback from customers also led to us collaborating with colleagues in Pollution Control and Building Standards to further develop our website information ['Development on contaminated land – what you need to know'](#). Due to the legacy left behind by North Lanarkshire's industrial past there is the potential for some contaminated land. The web page highlights the Contaminated Land Guide, and also advises developers on how to save time and avoid delays when submitting information relating to sites on contaminated land.

Case Study 2 | Ravenscraig update

In the 2020/2021 Planning Performance framework, we provided an update on the regeneration proposals for the former steelworks at Ravenscraig.

We reported:

- The updated Ravenscraig Masterplan was approved in October 2020
- The new Ravenscraig public park opened in Summer 2021
- Works started on the new 'employment access road'
- City Deal funding was confirmed allowing for significant infrastructure improvements to Ravenscraig

Progress continues to be made in the regeneration of the Ravenscraig site. Most notably, from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 we have helped achieve the following:

- **New bus service:** The updated masterplan made provision for a new bus service which would connect Ravenscraig with nearby railway stations and communities in Motherwell and Carfin. Following discussions with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and the developer (who is providing the necessary funding) the council is pleased to confirm that the new bus service will be procured during autumn 2022 for commencement in spring 2023. Along with active travel proposals (see below) this will add significantly to Ravenscraig's green travel credentials to the benefit of current and future users of the site.

- **Off site access improvements:** In accordance with the access strategy outlined and approved as part of the updated masterplan, detailed planning permission was issued in September 2021 for a new road connection between Motherwell and Ravenscraig. This comprises the construction of the new bridge across the West Coast Main Line railway, under which the new road and active travel routes will pass. Works started in May 2022, and this represents a major milestone in the development of Ravenscraig and will (once the new road is open) allow significant development potential within the site to be released.
- **Active travel proposals:** the council has delivered the first phase of the Ravenscraig Active Travel Link - a new cycle/footpath connecting Cragneuk with Ravenscraig and creating a direct, off-road link to the new public park opened in 2021. The planned second phase of works, which will create an east-west spur through Ravenscraig to New College Lanarkshire's Motherwell Campus, is planned to commence in 2022-2023.
- **Levelling Up Fund:** The council has confirmed that it continues to seek the investment in public and civic infrastructure required to support the regeneration and development of Ravenscraig, beyond the significant commitment and investment made by the Council and Scottish and UK Governments through City Deal and VDLF and through partners including SPT, and is making a bid to the UK Government's Levelling Up

Fund to support a mixed use development anchored by a community hub at the heart of the masterplan.

- **New housing developments:** Keepmoat, Barratt and Taylor Wimpey have all completed their respective housing developments within Ravenscraig, which together have provided 314 quality homes to the area. Keepmoat and the Council both have planning applications pending for 83 new houses within Ravenscraig, and we expect to make decisions on these applications in summer 2022.
- **Business and Industry:** Following on from the completion of the new 'employment access road', Ravenscraig Limited has initiated an extensive marketing exercise for the 32ha business and industry site at the heart of Ravenscraig, and we are hopeful that we will be able to provide news of business and industry planning applications in the next PPF.

Ravenscraig is an important part of the council's long-term plan as it will bring new homes, schools, businesses, jobs and leisure facilities over the next 25 years.

We look forward to reporting on further progress at Ravenscraig in next year's Planning Performance Framework.

Key Officer: Lindsay Kellock

Ravenscraig

The promotion of [pre-application advice for major development](#) has been successful. By guiding customers to an online pro forma, we ensure they provide us with the relevant information we need to do a pre-application appraisal on proposed major development.

This enables us to provide a bespoke response for each and every proposal, requesting supporting information relating to the particular development that is both clear and proportionate. This approach to early collaboration also allows us to discuss requirements for developer contributions at an early stage. Our requests for supporting information and for developer contributions are based on the scale and nature of the proposal, the guidance contained within our SPGs, and discussions with key consultees who would be commenting on planning applications.

[Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (SPG) forms an essential element for consistency, not only around decision making, but also in pre-application advice and submission making. The content of the SPG is being evaluated as part of the Local Development Plan process.

We continue to offer and highly recommend [processing agreements](#) with all major development applications and many local development applications. Our direct and proactive approach to encouraging their use has had a positive response. Supporting this approach during the reporting year we have developed a new process and staff guidance to create a more consistent approach when negotiating processing

agreements. It also gives staff more certainty, for example when terms of the agreement haven't been met by either party. Our commitment to timescales offers certainty to applicants and allows greater efficiency around case management and our new [procedure for dealing with legacy planning applications](#) strengthens this position as it sets out how we will manage delays in concluding legal agreements.

Our [North Lanarkshire Local Plan](#) gives stakeholders greater certainty by supporting consistency in decision making and in our advice to any party interested in new development. As a result, of the decisions made by the council last year most were consistent with the plan.

Our use of Masterplanning and our identified [Community Growth Areas](#) (CGA) offer further certainty to developers looking to invest in North Lanarkshire. By providing a structured approach and framework across a wide range of complicated issues, they provide a vision for each area and set out clear aims, objectives and design principles, as well as expertly guiding the process.

Our [Town Visions](#) have been shaped through extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the community to build a consensus around the future development of our towns. [Community Boards](#) enhance and support community involvement and provide a single approach for community-led decision making.



Orchardton Woods was zoned for business and industrial use in the original Cumbernauld New Town Development Plan. It was recognised as a regionally important site and remained zoned for these purposes in the North Lanarkshire Local Plan.

However, although there were from five to six prepared business and industrial plots available, there was low demand for this use at this location and despite significant efforts, the site remained unattractive to the market.

Orchardton Woods has been on the Scottish Vacant Derelict Land Register for a number of years, meaning the area was economically inactive and not reaching its potential for the people and communities in North Lanarkshire. The isolated nature of the site had led to it being used for antisocial behaviour and as such the site became a barrier to the local community accessing natural and established greens space.

North Lanarkshire has a significant amount of land for business and industry, and concern was raised that there was an oversupply. An alternative policy approach was seen as the way forward to rebalance the business and industrial land supply and to ensure abandoned sites could be regenerated and used to create valuable local assets.

To enable this alternative planning policy approach for business and industry in the area, we were awarded Scottish Government funding to run Charrette style workshops to look at land use in the area. This was the first time this style of consultation had been used to guide a new policy framework and structure for land use and our innovation led to the Charrette being a finalist in the National Awards for Quality in Planning.

With appropriate consultants appointed, we facilitated Charrette style workshops. Several events were organised involving Scottish Enterprise, SEPA, local stakeholders and a wide range of businesses and business support services in the area. In addition, our consultants carried out extensive phone questionnaires to gather further opinion and evidence. This feedback helped to identify specific types of locations, therefore rationalising the supply to meet the constantly changing economic environment that industry and business currently operate in.

As a result of the Charrette Orchardton Woods was identified as a potential area of change and rezoned as a Regeneration Site in the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan giving the site more potential and making it more attractive to development.

The development of Orchardton Woods Cumbernauld presents the opportunity to deliver several Ambitions and Strategic Objectives of the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise around Sustainable Place Making, Enterprise and Innovation.

This also reflects North Lanarkshire Council's One Place One Plan a shared ambition for inclusive sustainable growth and prosperity and a long-term vision where North Lanarkshire is the place to Live, Learn, Work, Invest and Visit. This is reflected in the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan driving the direction of Land Use Planning in the council area.

Our planning service was approached by Scottish Enterprise to assist in looking at how this area could become economically active and supportive of the council's shared ambition and long-term vision.

This early consultation and collaboration allowed both parties to bring together North Lanarkshire representatives from Planning Policy (with some guidance from Development Management), Greenspace and Project Delivery to have meetings and workshop with Scottish Enterprise representatives.

The outcome has resulted in a bold clear deliverable masterplan capable of supporting place transformation and area regeneration. This is achieved through co-locating employment opportunities for small and medium size enterprise (SMEs) and live-work units along side a new residential neighbourhood that helps meet local housing needs. This is set within the context of a strong mature landscape setting adjacent to Broadwood Loch and Mosswater Nature Reserve, that supports connectivity, active travel and the blue-green network.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we continue to see progress being made in the regeneration of Orchardton Woods. Scottish Enterprise has submitted a PAN (22/00040/PAN) and a Screening Option (22/00173/EIASCR) currently under assessment by Development Management colleagues. These proposals encompass residential use, employment and community uses, open space, woodland and a path and cycle network. These applications demonstrate that planning policy and input from the local community can be effective in creating viable sites that with regeneration add value and positively impact on local communities.

Key Officer: Linda Wilson

Governance

Our Planning and Place team sits within Planning and Regeneration and forms part of the Enterprise and Communities service.

This service cluster encompasses Enterprise, Planning, Housing and Environmental Assets, and is responsible for all land and property management as well as planning and delivery aspects (including roads, future school building and all associated community infrastructure).

As the council continues with plans to rationalise assets and develop its digital and online services, hybrid working has been introduced. Through this we aim to create a vibrant workplace culture allowing staff time to collaborate, learn and work together in an office environment as well as providing the flexibility and advantages of working from home. **Case Study 4** highlights the changes made as we have moved to a different phase of the pandemic.

With the statutory elements of planning working together under the Planning and Place manager, we continue to develop the principle of concentrating appropriate and proportionate resources that will allow us to focus on our core business and address our priorities.

A high performing planning system will have a critical role in supporting our future recovery in North Lanarkshire, so to ensure there is a capable, competent workforce for the future, we continue with

our commitment to continuous development of staff. This is supported through our Performance Review and Development (PRD) process. The NLC Learning Academy further supports employee and leadership development for all staff. **Case Study 5** highlights the success of our workforce development programme and the steps taken to ensure a workforce for the future.

Workloads, resources and performance are closely monitored through our regular management team meetings and our enhanced performance reporting prepared by business development colleagues assists this process. Our working practices and processes remain under review, and we continue to reflect on how we deliver our service **Case Study 6** and **Case Study 7** demonstrate changes implemented with a view to delivering efficiencies in how we issue decision notices and how we carry out vacant and derelict land audits.

Our Planning Committee meet on a four-weekly cycle with special meetings being held outside of the cycle for any urgent matters. To ensure people know what to expect from these meetings, we publish the [protocol for planning application hearings](#) online.

As the council moves to hybrid working arrangements, it is anticipated during 2022 that committee meeting evolve into hybrid meetings as we continue to review our working practices. The changes to our committee meetings during the pandemic didn't impact on our [scheme of delegation](#). Last year 94.2% of applications were decided under this scheme.

Applicants may seek a review of the decision made under the Scheme of Delegation to the [Local Review Body](#) (LRB). We provide a planning adviser who provides professional planning input to this process. The work of the LRB is held online and our committee service colleagues offer 1-1 guidance and support on how to participate as required to anybody attending. Considering how future changes can be capitalised on as we work towards hybrid committee hearings, we have gathered evidence to review LRB operation and practice with a view to advising the new administration following the Local Government elections 2022.

With strong collaboration between services, established links, such as working in partnership with the Housing service, enabled us to meet various statutory duties. This includes producing the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan, delivering affordable housing and supporting the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

Our collaborative working has also enabled us to develop a system to more efficiently manage information around surplus land supply. We will continue to work together to contribute to the delivery of housing, provide schools and to regenerate and develop vacant and derelict land in the area.

In addition, we worked in partnership with the LHS steering group outlining the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement for North Lanarkshire.

This is a key component of the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 being presented to Parliament in the autumn.

Case Study 4 | Preparing to move to hybrid working

Following the rapid shift to home working during the first lockdown of 2020, the planning service adapted and evolved to maintain service delivery for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire. This success was thanks to the resilience, dedication and professionalism of the team.

To capitalise on the success of these changes, during 2021 the council proposed updating its operating model to a hybrid workplace model. The ambition is to create a more agile, flexible, and collaborative workplace environment that will enable effective and more efficient service delivery and to allow staff to work closer to, and within communities.

In addition, this proposal supports the council in taking forward its plan for office rationalisation reducing 24 buildings to 6.

For the Planning and Place service, moving to the hybrid working arrangement means staff would be in a shared office base in the Civic Centre, Motherwell, or a shared hub facility a minimum six days in each four-week period. This change from home working would allow colleagues to meet and collaborate, learn and work together in an office environment while retaining the flexibility and continuing to support the work life balance many felt working from home offered.

Time in the office for the teams is meaningful and helps support good mental health and wellbeing as well as to facilitate face-to-face collaboration, training, team development and to support the induction of new staff.

The ultimate goal is to take forward flexible workspaces and technology that will bring significant benefits to staff and services. These include:

- more rapid decision making by involving the right people quickly (regardless of geography)
- the sharing of ideas and co-creation of solutions

- reduced travel to enable more effective use of time
- reduced overall carbon footprint
- increased staff engagement through connected teams
- improved data governance and information security

We anticipate with shared workspaces and more flexibility we will achieve improved corporate working leading to improved services for our customer and communities.

Our hybrid working arrangement is still in its infancy and further council wide staff engagement exercise will be carried out to get feedback on the arrangements, however our teams say:

- Hybrid working has given me a good work life balance. I wouldn't have been able to achieve this working full time in the office
- Attending the office gives me a chance to collaborate on a face to face basis. Skills that were underused while working from home constantly
- Hybrid working allows, accommodates and support employees to continue to undertake their work from home when there are personal issues or health problems that may have prevented them from being in the office full time
- I would consider hybrid working for me personally has been great. I spend less time travelling (more sustainable and better for the environment). My productivity has increased due to less office distraction (though good to catch up with colleagues during office days)
- It is good to be part of a real group of people engendering and re-enforcing the feeling of collective effort. It is good to have the collaborative effort in the office again which we once took for granted and to meet people from other service-related teams. I also like the balance of working from home as well as office as it is much more efficient in terms of time normally taken up in commuting

- Being able to sort things out face to face rather than by email has been really useful
- New staff or junior staff benefit from non-specific training and supervision by being in the office environment and allowing them to see how more experienced staff deal with issues such as difficult phone calls, Councillor enquiries and engagement with other officers in different services in the council
- I think hybrid working potentially has mental health benefits for some colleagues who prefer to have a separation between the office and their home. Additionally having a weekly in person interaction with colleagues provides a sense of team and a sense of perspective if you have had a particularly bad day that others understand and are having similar experiences sometimes as well
- I enjoy the hybrid approach to working as it is very flexible and saves journey time. It also means that we are socialising again with colleagues which is the main benefit for me

While most comments were positive, there are still issues to address such as lack of space for meetings, the necessity to set up and dismantle workspace IT equipment each day and the issues arising when monitors, keyboards or other equipment isn't working correctly.

Key Officer: Lorna Bowden





Summerlee

At Glasgow City Region level, with partners from East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils, we contributed to discussions on the future scope and direction of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Clydeplan area including changed governance arrangements for the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Green Network partnership.

Across the reporting year we have also participated in projects led by the Fife Local Development Plan peer review group and the Digital Office for Local Government Data Task Force Advisory Board. By taking part in these projects we have been able to advance understanding of planning issues that will ultimately influence future planning practices, policy and decisions.

River Clyde at Baron's Haugh



Case Study 5 | Performance monitoring and management

We highlighted in our 2019-20 PPF that for some time now we have been aware that the age profile of our planners is skewed with all of the managers and the majority of the senior officers being over 50 years old.

Financial pressures on the council over a prolonged number of years has resulted in a policy in of making staff in senior positions redundant to achieve savings targets. This in turn resulted in younger members of staff becoming frustrated at the lack of opportunities for career progression and leaving the organisation or moving to posts within other parts of the council with their posts remaining unfilled.

This issue was apparent across the council and is being addressed. One of the council's five key priorities is to improve North Lanarkshire's resource base, and this includes the commitment to 'Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition'. Within planning it is vital to build our future workforce to enable us to support the councils' ambitious plans for growth and prosperity for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

We needed to address the issue of succession planning and create opportunities for staff to grow and develop in their role and to reach their potential without having to leave the organisation to achieve this.

Working with the council's Talent and Organisational Development Team on their 'Building a workforce for the future' programme, one step taken to try to address this issue was to provide our Planning Technicians with the opportunity to study Spatial Planning at University of Glasgow. Leading to a Post Graduate Certificate.

The course would enable the Technicians to further develop their planning skills and experience and would also mean they would gain the qualification necessary to apply for Planning Assistant posts.

We are delighted to have achieved the best possible outcome as our Planning Technicians have both now applied for and successfully been appointed in the role of Planning Assistant within our team. We are proud of their talent, experience and dedication and we are sure they will continue to be an asset to the council as they progress in their new planning careers and further develop in their new role.

Ashley Cairns (Planning Assistant):

From starting as a modern apprentice back in 2002 with NLC I have always been learning along with working full time from studying an SVQ level 2 & 3 in Business Admin to then studying an HNC in Admin/IT, I then applied for a technicians post and was successful. After a couple of years in the post the opportunity came up to go to university to study a planning qualification.

I was a bit hesitant at the beginning as I have a young family at home and working full time as well as studying might have been extremely challenging, however with my managers support I got the confidence boost I needed and started my two year course in September 2021.

The university course itself has been challenging and a lot more work is involved that I initially anticipated. It has however, made me feel like I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to.

Alex Reid (Planning Assistant):

By juggling work and university, it has enhanced my ability to work under pressure, manage my time in a manner that is more productive, increased my organisational skills massively and helped with working out-with my comfort zone.

As we dealt with 'Contemporary Planning Systems' it gave me a better understanding how development management links in with the policy team and how important our development plan is. This made things clearer in my head on how our department works. I think working in a planning office helped me understand the learning outcomes of some of the classes because I can relate to it. It showed me how planning operated on a local, regional and national level.

My confidence has grown massively. I never thought I was good enough for university, not smart enough, but because people have backed me, my self-confidence has soared and I have realised that I am more than capable of doing anything if I set my mind to it. It has definitely changed me for the better.

Key Officer: Lorna Bowden



In addition, over the year participation in the following groups has add value to our service and to our communities as we continue to share good practice, skills and knowledge:

- Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS)
- HoPS Executive
- HoPS Development Plan group
- National Development Planning Forum
- HoPS Development Management group
- HoPS Digital Planning Working Group
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Development Planning Forum
- Clydeplan Industry Topic Group
- Clydeplan Steering Group
- Digital Office for Local Government, Local Government Sector and associated COVID-19 Data Task Force
- Antonine Wall World Heritage Site Steering Group
- eDevelopment and ePlanning project boards
- Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership
- Climate Ready Clyde
- Housing and Planning liaison group
- North Lanarkshire Council Community Empowerment Working Group

- Glasgow City Region Land Use and Sustainability Portfolio
- NLC New Build Delivery Group
- North Lanarkshire Access Panel
- NLC Operational Management Team
- NLC Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan Group
- NLC Planning, Regeneration and Communities Liaison Group
- NLC Joint working group with Planning, Building Standards and Pollution Control
- Ravenscraig Development Steering Group
- Monklands Hospital replacement board

- NLC Town and Community Hub Board
- Business and Industry Strategy Group
- Open Space Strategy Group
- Fife Local Development Plan Peer Review Group
- Ravenscraig Development Steering Group
- Monklands Hospital replacement board
- NLC Town and Community Hub Board
- Business and Industry Strategy Group
- Open Space Strategy Group
- Fife Local Development Plan Peer Review Group



Case Study 6 | Driving Improved Performance: New Development Management Decision Process

Looking to make further efficiencies in our development management process and to address performance timescales, our business development team worked closely with our development management team to look at how planning decisions were issued.

Exploring how we could use existing digital technology and work more effectively, a development management team led solution was developed to create a more efficient process for the preparation and issue of delegated decision notices. The process makes use of existing technology, clearly defines steps, roles and responsibilities, and enables built in workflow management and quality checks for each application.

With 94.2% of planning decisions within North Lanarkshire being delegated, it is anticipated the enhanced digitised end to end development management process for delegated applications will have a positive impact on performance time scales. Looking to capitalise on this progress, in the coming year we will consider how to further develop the new decision process to include all application types.

The brief was to review working practices, and to modernise and refine processes that would ultimately lead to improved performance and decision-making timescales in our development management team. Our business development team were commissioned to consider all opportunities for improvement and to establish a proposal for change that would meet our brief.

During summer 2021, online workshops with development management and support service staff were held at all levels to examine the application process and a consensus was reached for a new process.

The senior officers agreed the most efficient way of progressing the case would be for them to produce the report and decision notice and immediately after quality

checking them upload these documents to the case file in the Idox Document Management System. This would eliminate version control issues, and inefficient back and fourths of finalising and issuing notices with Support. Reports and decision notices were only produced when all information relating to a case was accurate, agreed between the case officer and the approving officer and captured in Uniform.

The next challenge was to develop tasks within the Idox Enterprise workflow tool to automate the agreed workflow, to create templates and guidance and to deliver training on the proposed process. Workflow tasks were developed to automate the steps between the case officer and approving officer at the recommendation and accepting the recommendation stage, and the Support team when the decision notice was ready to be sent out.

Uniform templates were adapted to suit the full automation of the process and a coded Word template prepared to allow the case officer to prepare their delegated report out with the Uniform system. This report meant the case officer could produce a Word report out with Uniform then copy and paste the code and text into the system when it was complete, addressing time out issues and concerns over using Uniform to write up the officer's report.

Process maps and staff guidance were prepared in a written format, but to enhance the suite of training tools, the business development team prepared training videos for each role that demonstrated and discussed the steps to be taken. This was rolled out during online training sessions, as this process was implemented prior to the introduction of hybrid working. To offer additional support while managing change out with the office environment, our business development colleagues were available to meet via Teams with anybody who required additional assistance.

Feedback from the Development Management team has given early indication that the change has been successfully implemented. With the process still in its infancy, we have still to provide performance data to evidence of the success of the new process in relation to performance, but we are confident that there will be a positive upturn.

Produced using existing digital technology and without any additional resource, the implementation of this change demonstrated there is still scope to work smarter within the service and key to success is an engaged workforce who are prepared to deliver team effort when it comes to the delivery of change.

Next steps will be to carry out a review of the process and to evidence the improvements made. Following that we will apply the same principles to the decision process of all application types to ensure we work in as consistent and efficient a way as possible.

Key Officer: Alex Hamilton / Moira McKenna Dell



Culture of Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is embedded in our culture and is critical in ensuring our success as we seek to deliver a high quality service. Thanks to the hard work of our skilled and committed workforce we meet this challenge and we continue to strive to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to help to ensure improved outcomes for our customers.

Our staff development policies add value by ensuring we have the skills to meet our goals and our online resource 'Work Well NL' provides wellbeing support for all employees. We continue to work to strengthen our team resources and enhance staff retention to help address succession planning. Regular training and cascade learning sessions ensure all staff have the right skill base and are up to date with all processes and policy they require to carry out their roles. In addition, mandatory training on topics such as risk, data protection and public sector equality duty ensure that best practice is embedded in our day to day activities, our processes and our ways of working.

In addition, we are proud to achieve [Disability Confident Leader](#) status, demonstrating that we lead the way for people with disabilities.

To enable more informed decision making, Elected Members training will continue around our service delivery and on topics such as changes brought about by the new Planning Act, NPF4 and new Local Development Plan.

Staff consultation, development and the self-evaluation of our service delivery is key to continuous improvement and to maximising the use of the resources available to us. To ensure all changes to our service delivery over the past year have added value, the Planning and Place manager invited staff to participate in process review workshops to ensure staff views on our how we deliver our services helped shape our ways of working.

These workshop sessions have proved valuable, providing feedback and insight from the team in terms of the efficiencies that could be made to our decision process and in providing a platform for general discussion around service delivery. As a result, we made adjustments to our decision process and provided additional support and training at the request of individuals. The workshops also provided a platform to discuss why we collect data and information, and why it is essential that we capture this as defined through standard processes to ensure we can meet performance reporting obligations. Communicating why we do what we do helps embed change within the teams and ensures all staff are engaged in the process.

Further process review workshops will take place that will ensure a consensus on how we move forward as a team and ultimately find solutions for our evolving service delivery.

Our improvement measures set out in last year's Planning Performance Framework report have made progress and the benefits are now being realised.

These benefits include:

- Realigning the validation of householder applications task to the technicians has helped to free up considerable time for planning officers and reduce processing times for the validation of these applications.
- Agile working allowing scope for in team collaboration. **Case Study 4** highlights the approach taken and feedback from the team on the impact of the new working arrangements.
- Effective succession planning leading to the professional development of existing staff and contributing to ensuring we have staff resources to meet the challenges ahead. **Case Study 5** highlights this success.
- Providing new internal processes supported by staff training and guidance to create efficiencies, build in quality checks and to develop more consistent ways of working around our delegated decision process, processing agreements, PAN process, legacy cases, telecoms prior approvals and vacant and derelict land audit. **Case Study 6** and **Case Study 7** highlight in detail our new decision process and vacant and derelict land audit methodology.
- Introducing a duty officer rota giving greater certainty around responses to general enquiries and also to help build knowledge and experience throughout the team.

Case Study 7 | Undertaking the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey remotely using Google earth and other digital resources to create a more efficient and more sustainable process

The Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS) is undertaken each year to establish the extent and state of vacant and derelict land in Scotland. The survey has been operating since 1988 and is managed by the Scottish Government.

[Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2021 - gov.scot](#)

The data provides an evidence base for monitoring the extent and state of vacant and derelict land, providing a basis to measure progress in bringing land back into productive use. The Council participates in this survey, undertaking an annual assessment of Vacant and Derelict Land across North Lanarkshire with a survey base date of 31 March each year.

Statistics derived from the Survey are used by the Scottish Government to help allocate and monitor the impact of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF) to which North Lanarkshire Council is one of the main recipients. The VDLF aims to tackle long-term vacant and derelict land in Scotland to help stimulate economic growth, create jobs, promote environmental justice and improved quality of life, and support communities to flourish and tackle inequalities. Within North Lanarkshire, tackling vacant and derelict land also reflects North Lanarkshire's shared ambition for sustainable economic development and growth.

The council also uses data from the survey as evidence to inform its Local Development Plan, helping to identify development opportunities for a range of land uses and reinforcing an approach to land use planning which focuses upon the regeneration of brownfield land.

Traditionally the Survey involved physical site visits to assess the nature of each site to determine the characteristics that make the site eligible for inclusion, e.g., presence of rubble, derelict buildings, or other structures, which were photographed with notes taken during the visit. This process was resource intensive given that each site required to be visited to determine change

since the preceding survey, recording key site characteristics for any new sites and to assess whether sites could be removed from the Survey if development or rehabilitation had taken place.

For the 2021 Survey this would have involved visiting 515 'active' sites plus 10 additional sites that were added to the Survey, as well as recording details on take up for the 30 sites that were removed from the Survey. These sites are spread throughout North Lanarkshire's urban and rural areas, with some being remote from council offices. For the 2018 Survey (the last Survey completed prior to Covid restrictions) we carried out some 16 days of site visits spread over a two-month period. While it was possible to survey 30 to 50 sites per day depending on their geographical distribution, poor weather often meant that visits were postponed, adding delay to the process. In addition to time spent on site and getting to sites, several weeks 'prep' work was required to create printed Map Books to enable the Survey itinerary to be carried out effectively, with further preparatory work required to identify new sites so that new locations could be added to the Survey Schedule.

While previous Surveys were resource intensive and subject to delay, there were few other options acquiring data other than visiting and photographing each site. However, in recent couple years there have been significant changes in the availability of aerial or satellite imagery, versions of which are now open source or can be accessed widely on platforms such as Google Earth. The Pro version of Google Earth has excellent coverage of North Lanarkshire with data frequently updated, thus allowing change to be identified on across a range of monitoring areas including Vacant and Derelict Land.

Access to this mapping data with its frequent updates allowed the 2021 Vacant and Derelict Land Survey to be exclusively carried out on a remote basis. Using Google Earth Pro alongside the Council's GIS software (ESRI ArcMap) on which the Council's

Vacant and Derelict Land data is held enabled seamless updating of records using. The GIS software is also connected to the UNIFORM system which enables the surveyor to identify the planning status of each site at the time of the Survey. A key feature of this approach is that change occurring on individual sites can be easily identified and mapped accurately using GIS, as opposed to attempting to mark up a map during a site visit where it is often difficult to see what is happening across an entire site, some of which may be inaccessible to the surveyor. This new approach allowed the survey to be completed quickly and accurately with considerable cost savings in terms of efficiency.

Undertaking the survey remotely became a necessity due to lock down and travel restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Given that site visits were almost impossible to undertake safely the key objective was to identify how the survey could be undertaken remotely using existing technology, while still providing an accurate and robust approach.

The approach was presented at the Scottish Vacant & Derelict Land Survey Working Group in July 2021. It has successfully demonstrated that the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey can be carried out accurately and effectively using Google Earth, without having to visit sometimes over 500 sites, and without the need to commission any new technology.

While there may still be a need in future for some limited site visits where aerial imagery is unclear or not regularly updated and/or to provide further site details in cases where additional information might be required for specific sites, this new method using existing technology offers a consistent and robust approach. This change to our working process has enabled us to make efficiencies and develop a sustainable approach for future surveys.

Key Officer: Stevan Gilchrist

- Publishing through our website new step by step customer video guidance 'how to' videos to help members of the public search for and comment on planning applications through the online portal.
- Refreshing our Enforcement Charter aims to communicate more effectively the enforcement process and what is in the interest of the wider public to take action on.

Following on from these service improvements, we are now focusing on our 2022/23 improvement action plan. We continue to review the demand on our service and are committed to providing modern, digital services and harnessing digital tools and systems to enhance our planning service. Working in partnership with the Business Development and Support team has already cut out inefficiencies and promoted consistency, improving the processing of planning applications. Looking to further build on these successes, in the coming year we will examine further our customer journeys and continue to develop an efficient and streamlined planning service. With a wealth of skills and experience within our teams, we will continue to take a team approach to guiding improvements.

We listen to feedback from partners and stakeholders and we strive to continually improve our performance and service delivery. Each layer of feedback, through both formal routes such as the developers forum as highlighted in **Case Study 1**, and informal routes such as direct feedback and staff testament helps us get to know our main customer groups and gives an insight

as to their needs and preferences. This knowledge helps us prioritise improvement activity and communicate to our customers the accurate and detailed information they need to make our service easily accessible and to understand the steps taken in the planning process while managing the expectation of what we can deliver.

Throughout the year we have continued to participate in several partnership and peer groups. Through partnership working both across the council and with external partners, peer review, benchmarking and sharing best practice, a forum is created for sharing knowledge, comparing outcomes and discussing future direction.

Through peer review we always welcome the opportunity to meet with a range of colleagues to develop links and nurture working relationships.

We have valued working with our peer review partners to discuss a wide range of topics. This enabled us to share experiences and has given the opportunity to discuss best practice and to exchange views to get insight into the similar, but different challenges faced by another planning authorities.

Peer review has influenced and shaped our service improvements in various ways. Our new householder validation process and our update to our appeals process to make use of the DPEA document library are examples of how peer review partners, Aberdeen City Council and Glasgow City Council respectively, have had a positive impact on how our service has evolved. This year following contact with our peer review partners, Edinburgh City Council, we have added a commentary on our performance markers.



Auchinstarry

Part 2: Supporting Evidence

Moodiesburn

The style of our Planning Performance Framework has evolved over the years and has been influenced by peer review.

The report was compiled drawing on evidence from the following sources. Click on the links below to take you to the document or website described:

- [Link to The Plan for North Lanarkshire](#)
- [Link to North Lanarkshire The Place, The Vision](#)
- [Link to North Lanarkshire Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan](#)
- [Link to North Lanarkshire Town Visions](#)
- [Link to Community Boards](#)
- [Link to Glasgow City Region City Deal](#)
- [Link to Infrastructure Fund](#)
- [Link to A8/M8 corridor access improvements](#)
- [Link to Glenboig link road](#)
- [Link to Pan-Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor information](#)
- [Link to Local Development Plan Modified Plan](#)
- [Link to Gartcosh:Glenboig Community Growth Area](#)
- [Link to Town Centres](#)
- [Link to Development Management Customer Charter](#)
- [Link to Enforcement Charter](#)
- [Link to 'Listening to You' complaints procedure](#)
- [Link to Pre-Application Advice for Major Development](#)
- [Link to Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)
- [Link to Planning Processing Agreement](#)
- [Link to Protocol for Planning Application Hearings](#)
- [Link to Scheme of Delegation](#)
- [Link to the Local Review Body](#)
- [Link to Disability Confident Leader](#)
- [Link to DPEA Core Documents Library](#)



Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study (pg number)	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study (pg number)
Design		Interdisciplinary Working	Case study 4
Conservation		Collaborative Working	Case study 1, 4
Regeneration	Case Study 2, 3	Community Engagement	Case study 3
Environment		Placemaking	
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning	Case study 2	Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance		Process Improvement	Case study 6, 7
Housing Supply	Case Study 1	Project Management	
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	
Economic Development		Staff Training	Case study 5
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes	Case Study 6	Transport	
Planning Applications		Active Travel	
Other:			

Carnegie Library, Coatbridge



Part 3: Service Improvements



In North Lanarkshire, Planning and Place will play a significant role in supporting future economic recovery in the area following the coronavirus crisis.

During this uncertain and challenging year, we have moved swiftly to adapt our service and our actions reflect the need to review these changes as our service evolves.

While this report lays out our service improvements for the coming year, our plans may be adapted with changing priorities.

In the coming year covering the 12 months from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, we will:

Review:

- Enforcement processes to consider a cross service early observations through a combined team report
- Metrics and geographies for the definition of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Develop:

- Appeals process to streamline the task of collating information and develop Enterprise tasks to automate the exchange of information within the team (continued from 2021-22)
- A standardised approach to developer contributions and strengthen our policy guidance (continued from 2021-22)

- A streamlined and improved process for dealing with Section 69 and Section 75s (continued from 2021-22)
- Online version of North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan
- Draft Participation and Engagement Strategy for Local Development Plan 2
- Initial programme for initial key stakeholder discussion for Local Development Plan 2

Implement:

- New staffing structure and further review of support function to align priorities and to address future challenges
- A series of staff workshops on process review with a focus on performance to identify areas for improvement and to ensure the team have the information needed to perform in their role.
- New householder CLP process by moving task from planning officers to the technical support team to make efficiencies and to further develop role of the technical support team

Continue to:

- Address succession planning through recruitment and staff development
- Seek opportunities for peer group and partnership working to identify service improvements
- Engage with local communities on planning matters
- Deliver elected members training reflecting on relevant topics such as changes brought about by the new Planning Act, NPF4 and new Local Development Plan

Monthly meetings will be scheduled to monitor the progress of these actions.

Delivery of service improvement actions committed in previous year in 2020-21

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?	
Review		
New ways of working, including working from home and development management and enforcement processes to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our customers.	Hybrid working has been introduced meaning staff are based in shared office accommodation a minimum of six days in each four week period. This enables the teams to work in an office environment while retaining the flexibility and continuing to support the work life balance many felt working from home offered	
Our customer journeys through digital sprints in partnership with DigitalNL,	This work will now merge with the national digital transformation programme for the digital transformation of the planning system.	N/A
Customer communication methods with a view to introducing a duty officer rota to ensure our communication methods are still appropriate and meet the needs of our customers.	A duty officer rota, protocol, and guidance were prepared and rolled out. Numbers of enquiries were monitored and can demonstrate that the volume of enquiries was low so unlikely to impact on staff resources.	
Communication methods within the team to ensure effective engagement and the efficient cascade of information following the shift to home working.	In addition to regular team meetings, business development colleagues hosted a series of online workshops with the development management team to engage further on matters relating to process change and performance monitoring. The sessions received positive feedback across the board and will continue to ensure the efficient cascade of information.	
Succession planning strategy to date in light of challenges and opportunities presented over the past year.	The succession planning strategy has continued to have a positive impact with two technicians now promoted to the role of planning assistant to support and grow our resources.	
Methodology used to undertake annual Housing Land Audit.	A new methodology using council tax records to track housing completions has created efficiencies in the annual HLA audit process.	
Householder CLP process to move task from planning officers to technical support team to make efficiencies and to further develop role of the technical support team.	This workstream was reviewed and it was recommended and agreed it appropriate that householder CLP sit with our technicians. Guidance and automated workflow tasks have been prepared. In the coming year as we appoint new technicians in our vacant posts, following training we will realign this task to free up significant time for planning officers.	

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?	
Enforcement Charter with a view to ensuring it is up to date, accessible and relevant to how we are carrying out our enforcement process	In addition to publishing our Enforcement Charter in an accessible web format, we have provided clearer information on what is a breach of planning control and on what breached have an impact in planning terms. The aim of these changes was to better manage expectation of the role planning have in dealing with development at the focus of a complaint.	
The structure and composition of the service to ensure we have adequate staff resources allocated in the correct teams to deliver the new requirements placed upon the service by the introduction of the new Planning Act.	A new staff structure has been prepared and will be implemented in the coming year as we shape our service to meet the needs and demands of the future.	
Our partnership working and peer groups to ensure the groups we participate on add value to our service, customers and communities.	We have reviewed the partnership working groups we attend to ensure we can participate meaningfully and that the groups we attend add value to our service.	
Develop		
A timetable for delivery of Supplementary Planning Guidance identified as required following Adoption of the Local Development Plan.	This timetable is dependent on the adoption of the Local Development Plan. Notice of intention to adopt the LDP has been submitted to the Scottish Ministers.	To be rescheduled for 2022-23 due to LDP examination process
Appeals process to streamline the task of collating information and develop Enterprise tasks to automate the exchange of information within the team	We have developed a proposal for change to the Local Review Body process for approval by the council. If agreed this proposal will be further developed to create a working process and key workflow tasks will be identified to automate the exchange of information within the team.	
A standardised approach to developer contributions and strengthen our policy guidance.	This work is ongoing and links to work being carried out with SPG.	To be rescheduled for 2022-23 due to LDP examination process

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?	
A streamlined and improved process for dealing with Section 69 and Section 75s (ongoing).	This work continues to progress. A model agreement has been prepared and a process for dealing with legacy cases with Section 75 attached developed and implemented.	
A process for dealing with legacy cases with Section 75 attached.	A committee report presented on 24 February 2022 detailed the new procedure for dealing with legacy planning applications with Section 75 attached. To support this new procedure, four weekly reports are produced for managers on legacy cases and standard letter templates have been provided for the team to ensure a consistent approach is taken.	
A New Build Development Monitoring report in collaboration with Business Development colleagues.	A new build development monitoring report has been prepared and will be collated using planning, building standards and council tax information six monthly to provide an overview of development in the area.	
New customer guidance on how to view and comment on planning applications for the new version of Public Access.	A new video step by step guide was prepared, and following customer consultation, was published through our website.	
Implement		
Physical records management plan of work to reduce paper files	A contractor was appointed and work is underway to reduce paper files through the scanning and indexing of paper files to reduce physical records.	
Householder validation process across the whole area to realign tasks and to increase consistency ensuring that planning applications are processed consistently and with minimum delay.	Realigning the validation of householder applications task to the technicians has helped to free up considerable time for planning officers and reduce processing times for householder applications.	
Our development management Enterprise workflow tasks to assist the issue of planning permission following decision.	The new internal process for development management delegated decisions was supported by staff training and guidance. It is anticipated the new process will create efficiencies with built in quality checks and more consistent ways of working around our delegated decision process.	

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?	
Continue to		
<p>Seek opportunities for peer group and partnership working to identify service improvements.</p>	<p>We identified and joined the Fife Council LDP peer review group to contribute to new working processes around LDP.</p> <p>Internally we are involved in a number of new working groups. Participation in groups such as the Town and Community Hub Board, Business and Industry Strategy Group and Open Space Strategy Group ensures the planning service is placed in a key position to influence and support delivery of the councils priorities.</p>	
<p>Engage with local communities on planning matters.</p>	<p>We engaged closely with Steps and District Community Council to develop our step by step video on how to search for and comment of planning applications.</p> <p>We engaged with the NL Access Panel on the issues around hosting online Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) public events and ensuring these events are accessible for all.</p>	
<p>Deliver elected members training reflecting on relevant topics such as changes brought about by the new Planning Act, NPF4 and new Local Development Plan.</p>	<p>Elected members training has continued focusing on the new Planning Act.</p>	
<p>Contribute to the development of the North Lanarkshire Environmental Strategy 2021 and lead on the development of the Open Space Audit and Strategy.</p>	<p>Work is ongoing and progressing with the next steps that include the development of the project initiation document.</p>	

Part 4: National Headline Indicators

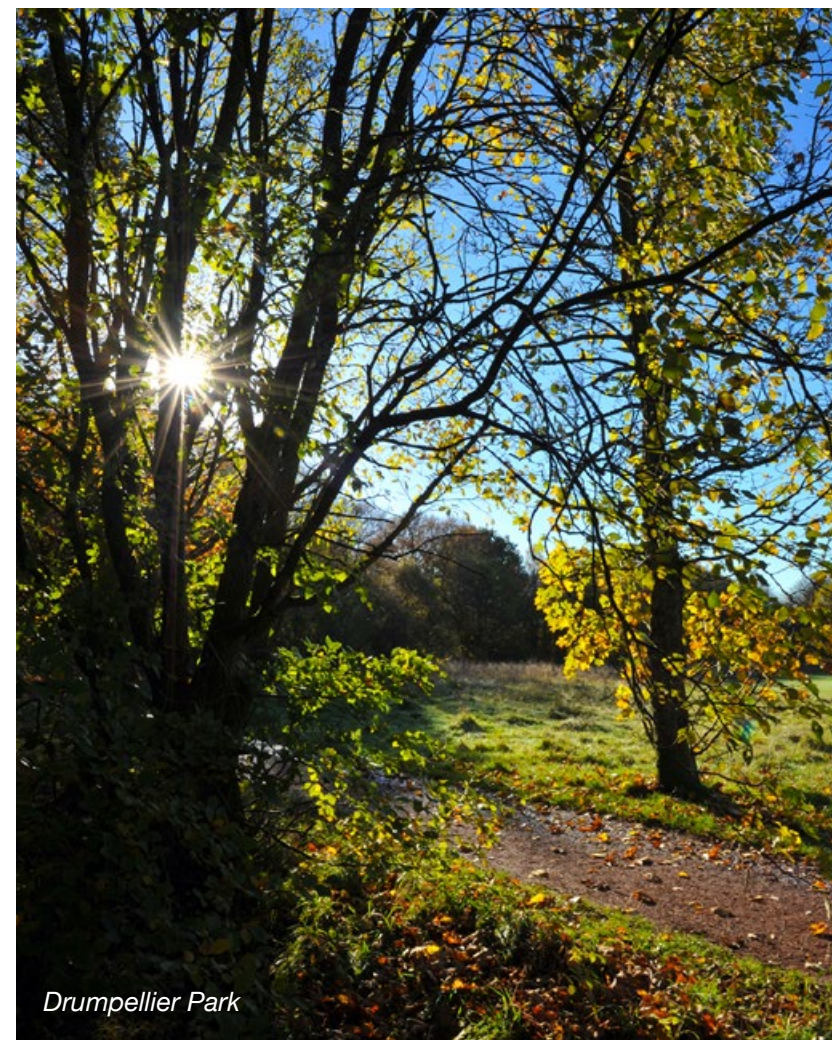
Laburnum Road, Viewpark

A (NHI) Key outcomes Development Planning

Development Planning	2020-21	2021-22
Local and Strategic Development Planning:		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	9 years and 6 months	10 years and 6 months
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	N	N
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Y-later	Y-later
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	N/A	N/A
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
Established housing land supply	22,145 units	21,508 units*
5-year effective housing land supply programming	8,480 units	9,725 units*
5-year effective land supply total capacity	15,826 units	16,019 units*
5-year housing supply target	5,300 units	5,300 units*
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)	8.0 years	9.2 years*
Housing approvals	2,673 units	1,003 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	5,569 units	5,328 units*
Marketable employment land supply	479.72 ha	471.68 ha
Employment land take-up during reporting year	6.26 ha	4.26 ha

B NHI Key outcomes - Development Management:

Development Management	2020-21	2021-22
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	10 %	10.9 %
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	46.6 % (7)	36.4% (4)
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	97.7%	95.6%
Delegation rate	94.2%	94.2%
Validation	37.3%	60.7%
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	26.5 weeks	37.2 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	13.9 weeks	11.8 weeks
Householder developments	10.1 weeks	9.0 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	19	56
Number remaining	64	56



Drumpellier Park

Development Planning and Development Management

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Development Planning: We have made changes to the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan Modified Proposed Plan following the publication of the Report of Examination in May 2021.

Following approval by the Planning Committee in November 2021, we submitted the Plan as amended to the Scottish Ministers for approval to adopt.

Following a long period of consideration, Scottish Ministers advised on 5 July that that we can proceed to Adopt the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan.

Effective land supply and delivery of outputs:

The housing land audit helps to address any housing supply issues through the plan making process in order to ensure that there is an adequate land supply available for house building. The land supply varies year-to-year as a result of the status of sites changing, being built on, or new sites being added.

Following publication of Scottish Planning Policy 2020 and PAN 01/2020 on 18 December 2020, the 5-year effective housing land figures are to be derived using the housing land requirement, not the housing supply target. Our 5-year housing land requirement is reported as 6,100 units.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Project Planning: We offer anyone seeking pre-application advice on major development the opportunity to meet with us to discuss their proposal. This option ensures a high quality and targeted approach to adding value to development in the area. To make this new way of working user-friendly we encourage the use of our [pre-application enquiry form](#) ahead of the meeting.

Our practice of directing those dealing with Local Development to our website for information has streamlined the process. The resulting drop in the number of applications that are subject to pre-application advice allows officers to devote more time to offering a dynamic and modern service that meets our customer's needs.

Decision Making: Our decision making figures have held steady on last year's performance. We continue to monitor these figures closely.

Validation rates have increased with the introduction of a standardised and consistent approach to the validation of householder applications, and the realignment of this task to the planning technicians.

Decision-Making Timescales: Decision making timescales have improved across Local Development and Householder application types. With new working practices bedding in, and the introduction of new

processes for local and householder applications and more focussed performance management, our dedicated development management team have delivered.

We anticipate an improvement in Major Development timescales in the coming year as the process changes and focussed performance management become embedded in this specialist area of work.

Legacy Cases: Our new procedure for dealing with planning legacy cases has been successful with 56 being cleared during the reporting period. The number remaining has reduced on last years figure and we anticipate further improvement during the coming year as our new process becomes embedded.

C Enforcement activity

Development Planning	2020-21	2021-22
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	13 months	1 month
Complaints lodged and investigated	10	19
Breaches identified – no further action taken	33	115
Cases closed	140	388
Notices served	1	1
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

Enforcement: We continue to provide a proportionate response to enforcement enquiries. With updates made to our Enforcement Charter, we hope to highlight what is and what is not a planning matter, the priority system used for investigating possible breaches in planning control and better manage expectation around the take up of enforcement cases.

The number of cases closed remains high as we continue to review and close historic cases where we did not use our powers (which are discretionary) to investigate or to pursue formal enforcement action.

Cherry Blossom at Dalziel





Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

Centenary Park, Airdrie

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

Timescales	2020-21	2021-22	
Overall			
Major developments	26.5 weeks	37.2 weeks	
Local developments (non-householder)	13.9 weeks	11.8 weeks	
• Local: less than 2 months	6.8 weeks	7.0 weeks	44.2%
• Local: more than 2 months	15.9 weeks	15.5 weeks	55.8%
Householder developments	10.1 weeks	9.0 weeks	
• Local: less than 2 months	6.2 weeks	6.5 weeks	60.3%
• Local: more than 2 months	12.6 weeks	12.9 weeks	39.7%
Housing Developments			
Major	28.3 weeks	52.8 weeks	
Local housing developments	17.3 weeks	12.3 weeks	
• Local: less than 2 months	7.1 weeks	7.0 weeks	44.2%
• Local: more than 2 months	18.2 weeks	15.5 weeks	55.8%

Timescales	2020-21	2021-22	
Business and Industry			
Major	9.2 weeks	13.4 weeks	
Local business and industry developments	13.5 weeks	12.6 weeks	
• Local: less than 2 months	7.1 weeks	7.2 weeks	40.3%
• Local: more than 2 months	15.6 weeks	16.2 weeks	59.7%
EIA Developments	10 weeks	27.9 weeks	
Other Consents	10.4 weeks	6.7 weeks	
Planning/legal agreements			
• Major: average time	20.2 weeks	65.7 weeks	
• Local: average time	29.7 weeks	21.8 weeks	

B Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Original decision upheld				Total number of decisions 2021-22
	2020-21		2021-22		
	No.	%	No.	%	
Local reviews	8	88.9%	7	78%	9
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	7	54.8%	10	80%	12

Stane Gardens, Shotts



Decision-making timescales (based on ‘all applications’ timescales):

Decision making timescales have improved across Local Development and Householder application types. With new working practices bedding in, and the introduction of new processes for local and householder applications and more focussed performance management, our dedicated development management team have delivered.

We anticipate an improvement in Major Development timescales in the coming year as the process changes and focussed performance management become embedded in this specialist area of work.

Decision-making: Local Reviews and Appeals

As anticipated the number of appeals has remained steady.



Part 6: Workforce Information

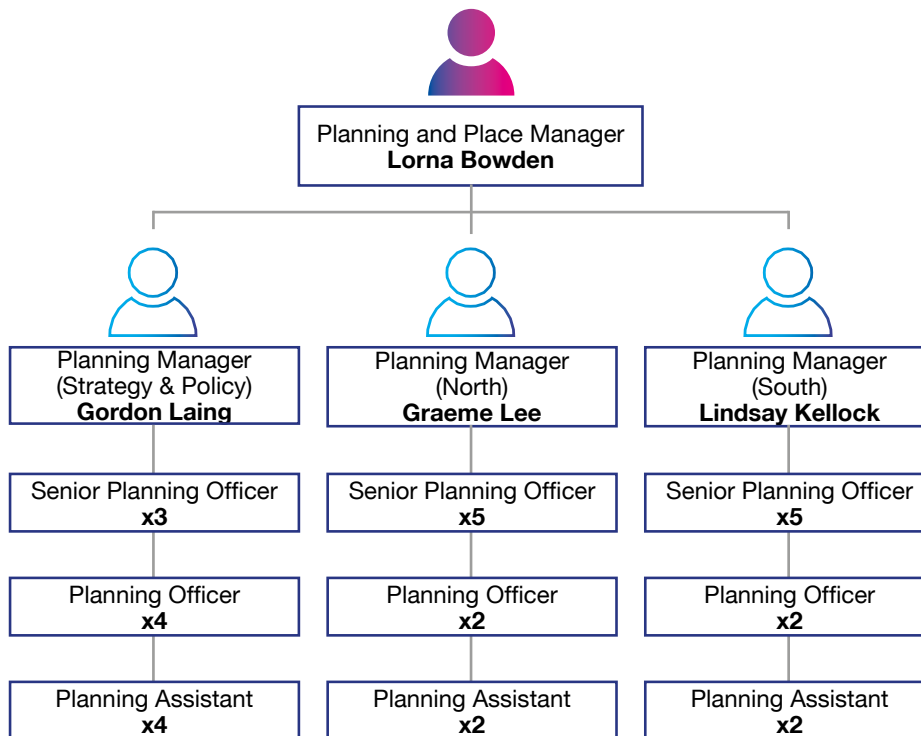


Maxim Office Park

Management Levels	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
	Chief Executive	Director	Head of Service	Manager
Head of Planning Service				1

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	2
30-39	5
40-49	12
50 and over	14

RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount
Chartered staff	22



Part 7: Planning Committee Information

Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	0
Planning committees	10
Area committees	0
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	3
LRB site visits	0



Appendix

Performance Marker Report			
No	Performance marker	RAG rating 2020-21(PPF 10)	Evidence provided for this performance marker 2021-22 (PPF 11)
1	Decision-making; continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Red: 2020-21	<p>We recognise the challenges our teams have faced in adapting to new ways of working and are pleased to demonstrate our decision-making times for both Local developments and Householder developments have reduced.</p> <p>While there has been an increase in timescales for dealing with major development, we anticipate improvements as new digital processes become embedded.</p> <p>Contributing to reducing decision making timescales, evidence provided in Case Study 6 and Case Study 4 demonstrates the steps we have taken to support our teams in their role as we create efficiencies in our decision process and provide a more collaborative working environment where our team can meet and work together effectively.</p> <p>Part 1 – Governance highlights our internal enhanced performance reporting that contributes to supporting the team, and our monitoring of workloads and resources to help us identify where further support can be given.</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: 2020-21	<p>As highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of service and Engagement and reported previously, we continue to offer and encourage processing agreements for all major applications and many local developments.</p> <p>Processing agreements are advertised on our website and to further support this during the reporting year we have developed a new internal process and staff guidance to support a more consistent approach when negotiating processing agreements.</p>
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees <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 	Green: 2020-21	<p>As highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of service and Engagement and reported previously, we continue to provide a pre-application advice service for major applications. We promote this through our website and by staff engaging with prospective applicants. Applicants with local developments are encouraged to look at our website in the first instance, and our duty officer can offer advice and support where required.</p> <p>Our online pro-forma continues to ensure we provide a clear and proportionate request for supporting information to prospective applicants.</p>

Performance Marker Report			
No	Performance marker	RAG rating 2020-21(PPF 10)	Evidence provided for this performance marker 2021-22 (PPF 11)
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	Amber: 2020-21	As highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of service and Engagement, our new procedure for dealing with legacy planning applications sets out how we will manage delays in concluding legal agreements. We anticipate will positively impact on time scales as this change becomes embedded. We continue to review this area of work as we seek to identify any further areas for development of the processes around legal agreements.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement charter updated / republished within last 2 years 	Green: 2020-21	As highlighted in Part 3: Service Improvements, our enforcement charter has been updated and is published through our website in an accessible format. The charter was 1 month old at the end of the reporting period.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement: progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber: 2020-21	<p>As discussed throughout the report, we have been ambitious for our improvement actions and the scale of change within the service. Of our 24 improvement commitments, we have completed 19, and made significant progress with two, creating tangible improvements for our team and our service delivery. One action has been removed as we merge our digital ambitions with the national digital transformation programme and two actions have been rescheduled for the coming year due to the LDP examination process.</p> <p>Our performance timescales have improved on Local Development and Householder applications, and we anticipate improvement around major development as change becomes embedded.</p> <p>The number of legacy cases cleared has increased significantly and the number remaining has decreased.</p> <p>Our Enforcement Charter has been reviewed and is up to date. Our LDP has been submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval to adopt.</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption 	Red: 2020-21	As evidenced in National Headline Indicators, we made changes to the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan Modified Proposed Plan following the publication of the Report of Examination in May 2021. Following approval by the Planning Committee in November 2021, Scottish Ministers advised on 5 July that that we can proceed to Adopt the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan.

Performance Marker Report			
No	Performance marker	RAG rating 2020-21(PPF 10)	Evidence provided for this performance marker 2021-22 (PPF 11)
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 	Amber: 2020-21	<p>Scottish Ministers advised on 5 July that that we can proceed to Adopt the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Our approach to developing the replacement LDP with multiple team members discussing and agreeing proposals has progressed the Plan as we anticipated.</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year 	N/A	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year 	N/A	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications. 	Green: 2020-21	As highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of Outcomes, our guidance and policies continue to contribute to the delivery of improved economic opportunities and outcomes for the people of North Lanarkshire.
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 	Green: 2020-21	As highlighted in North Lanarkshire, our staffing structure enables us to combine skills and resources to address challenges through integrated solutions, making our areas attractive business locations, improving employment opportunities, encouraging strong sustainable communities, and enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment. We also work closely with housing, the GIS team and colleagues across building standards and pollution control to improve service delivery around matters such as development on contaminated land (highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of Service and = Engagement).

Performance Marker Report			
No	Performance marker	RAG rating 2020-21(PPF 10)	Evidence provided for this performance marker 2021-22 (PPF 11)
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities 	Green: 2020-21	<p>Part 1 – Governance outlines the groups we participate in as we continue to share good practice, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Our peer review partners have also influenced our service delivery and continues to do so as we have evolved our PPF report to include this performance markers section following early discussion with colleagues from Edinburgh City Council.</p>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old 	Red: 2020-21	<p>As highlighted in Part 1 – Quality of service and Engagement, our new procedure for dealing with legacy planning applications sets out how we will manage delays in concluding legal agreements. This has enabled us to conclude 56 legacy case applications within the reporting period and had also reduced the number remaining to 56 as evidenced in National Headline Indicators.</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: 2020-21	<p>Part 1 – Quality of Service and Engagement outlines that guidance on developers contributions is included in our supplementary planning guidance. These SPGs will be subject to review following the adoption of the Local Development Plan as we work to strengthen this guidance. Notice of intention to adopt the LDP has been submitted to the Scottish Ministers.</p> <p>Developer contributions are discussed at an early pre application stage, and that requests are based on the scale and nature of the proposals.</p>

This document can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.

To make a request, please contact Corporate Communications at: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

'S urrainn dhuinn an sgrìobhadh seo a chur ann an diofar chànanan agus chruthan, a' gabhail a-steach clò mòr, braille, cruth claisneachd agus cruthan dealanach agus ruigsinneach.

Gus iartas a dhèanamh, cuir fios gu Conaltradh Corporra aig: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

Niniejszy dokument można otrzymać w wielu różnych językach i formatach, w tym również dużym drukiem, alfabetem Braille'a, w wersji dźwiękowej, elektronicznej i w innych dostępnych formatach.

Prośby należy składać na ręce zespołu ds. komunikacji drogą elektroniczną na adres: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

此文件可以多种不同语言和格式提供, 包括大字体、点字、音频、电子和易读格式。

如想提出请求, 请联系企业传讯部: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

اس دستاویز کو مختلف زبانوں اور صورتوں بشمول بڑے حروف، بریل، آڈیو، الیکٹرانک اور قابل رسائی صورتوں میں فراہم کیا جا سکتا ہے۔
براہ کرم درخواست کے لیے کارپوریٹ کمیونیکیشنز سے اس پر رابطہ فرمائیں: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

Produced by

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Planning and Place

Enterprise and Communities

Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street

Motherwell ML1 1AB

t. 01236 632500

e. planningenquiry@northlan.gov.uk

NORTHLANARKSHIRE.GOV.UK

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Silver

