
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION

Title: PLANNING SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE

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Purpose

To update and inform the Committee on the statistical performance of the CNPA Planning Service and highlight changes or improvements in its delivery.

Recommendation

That the Committee:

- i. Note the internal planning service monitoring results outlined in this report.**

Background

1. The CNPA Planning Service and Management Team use quarterly performance reports to examine Planning Service performance more closely and implement improvements and changes to the service. Officers take performance updates to the Planning Committee every six months for information and as a way of supplementing annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) reports.
2. The Planning Committee's last planning service performance update was in November 2015. The significant points from this report are:
 - A. The effect of clearer call-in criteria and fewer applications being called in; and
 - B. Continued uptake of processing agreements and a continued link with fast determinations.

Numbers of Planning Applications Determined

3. The last Planning Service performance update reported that the CNPA was calling in fewer planning applications than we had previously. This has led to fewer applications being determined by the CNPA, from 48 in 2013/14 to 41 in 2014/15 and 24 in 2015/16.

Determination timescales and processing agreements

4. The CNPA's use of processing agreements continues to be a good way to provide certainty for applicants and for CNPA staff. During 2015/16, 71% of the CNPA's

determined planning applications had processing agreements, with the agreed timescales met on all but one of the applications. The average time for determination of applications with a processing agreement during 2015/16 was 16 weeks. The official statistics produced by the Scottish Government exclude timescales for applications with processing agreements, so figures one and two below do not include applications with processing agreements.

Figure 1

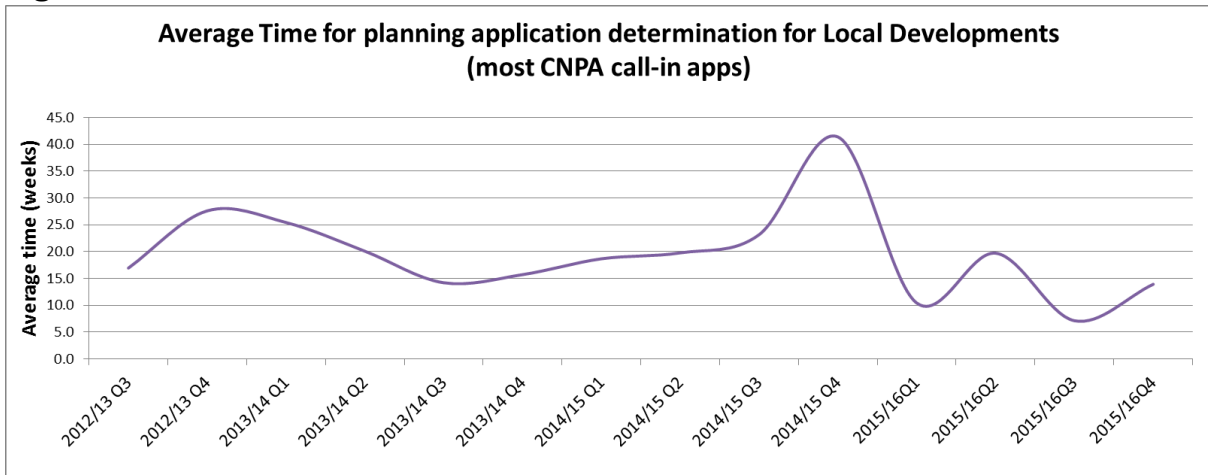
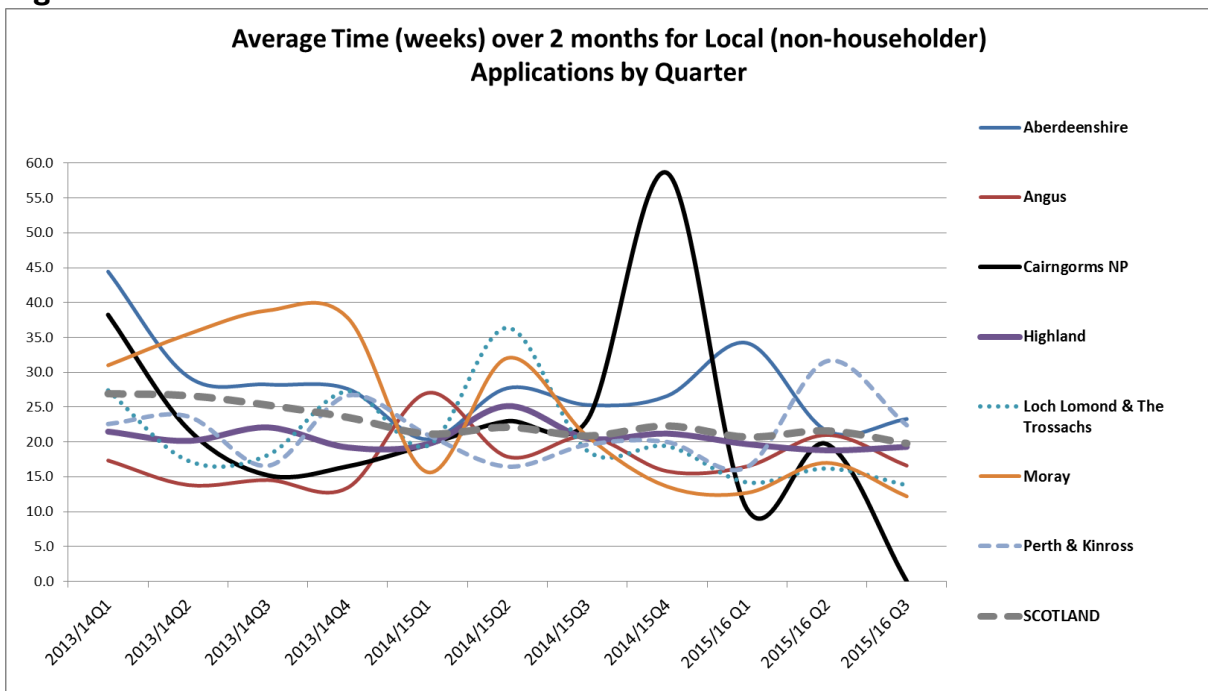


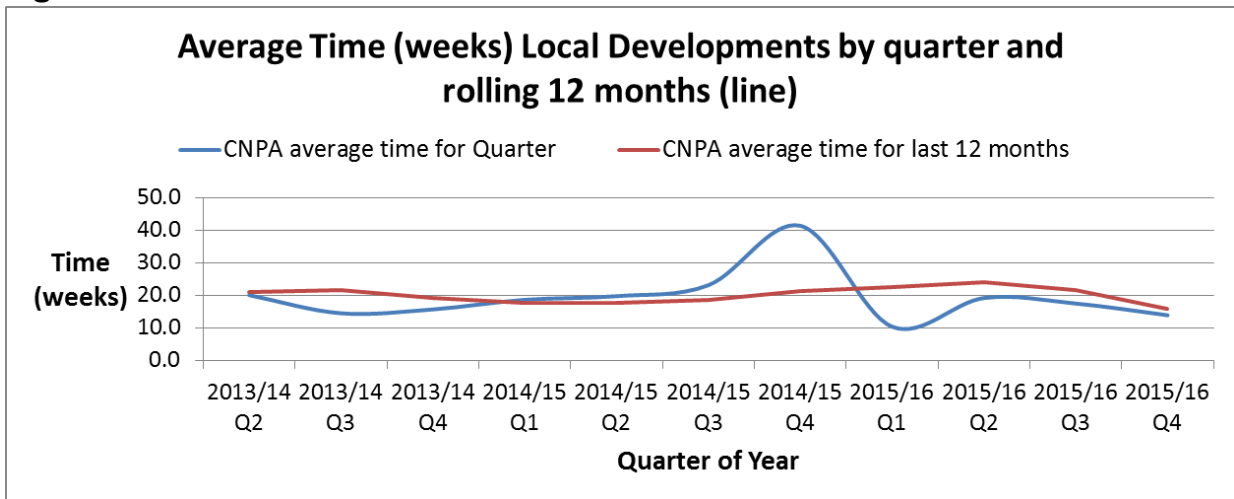
Figure 2



- Figure one shows the average determination time in each quarter for local developments over the past three years. Figure two shows data for applications that take planning authorities more than two months to determine compared to a range of other planning authorities and Scotland. This shows how decision making timescales change over time in most planning authorities, and particularly in smaller planning authorities, where there are fewer applications. The CNPA's average figure of 16 weeks for applications with a processing agreement during 2015/16 would compare well with other planning authorities and the average for Scotland.

- The internal audit of the planning service that reported during 2015/16 recommended that the CNPA use a rolling annual average indicator for service performance monitoring. Figure three shows the CNPA's quarterly average against a rolling annual average figure. In simple terms, if the average time for a quarter is lower than the rolling average figure, then performance should be improving. Quarters three and four of 2015/16 showed a steady improvement.

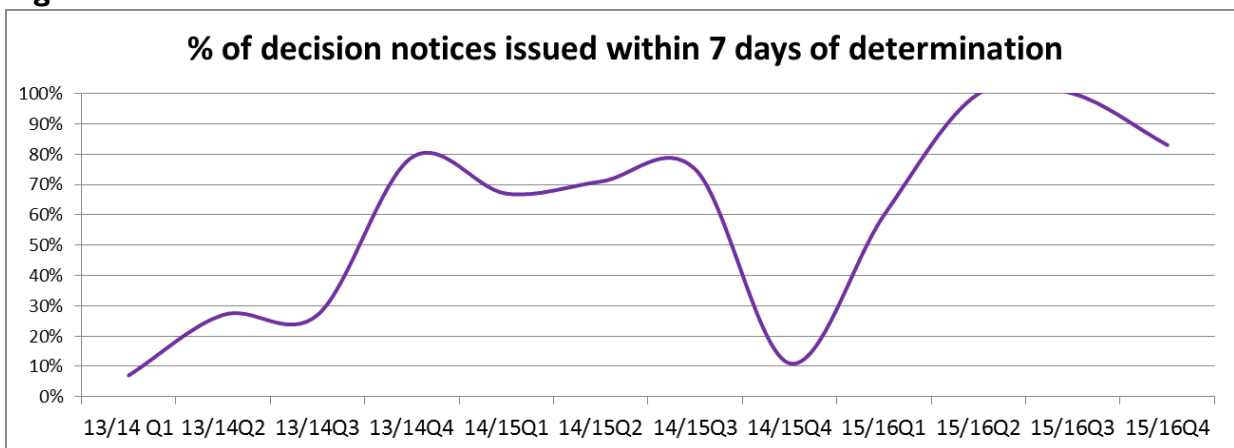
Figure 3



Issuing decision notices

- The planning service has continued to maintain a pattern of swift decision notice following planning committee decisions (where there are not legal agreements to be concluded), shown in figure four. In quarter two and three, all decision notices were issued with 7 days of the Planning Committee's decision, while in quarter four, 83% of the decision notices were issued within 7 days. It can still take a long time to conclude legal agreements following a planning committee decision, leading to delays in the issue of decision notices.

Figure 4



Planning Service Priorities

8. The Planning Committee approved 10 improvement priorities for the planning service during 2016/17 at the 15 April 2016 meeting. We will provide a more complete update on progress with the next planning service performance update in November 2016.

Planning Service Priority	
1	Consolidate existing processes and procedures (making sure past improvements become established practice and behavior)
2	Review internal consultation procedures for specialist advice (completing the priority identified in 2015/16)
3	Support move to an electronic/paperless Planning Committee (reducing costs and improving efficiency)
4	Plan and deliver a Planning Committee training programme (learning from past cases, improving understanding of current issues and practice)
5	Consolidate delegated authority provisions (to provide certainty for Committee and officers and ensure efficient operation of service)
6	Carry out a review of infrastructure requirements for allocated development sites (improving the CNPA's ability to deliver the Local Development Plan and Action Programme)
7	Complete the Design Awards 2016 competition (raising awareness, understanding and expectations of good design)
8	Undertake a programme of Town Centre Health checks (building on lessons learnt through Grantown Town Centre Pilot Project)
9	Develop a series of standard planning conditions (to provide consistency for development management, monitoring and enforcement)
10	Prepare and implement standard legal agreement templates (to improve efficiency in concluding legal agreements)

Next report

9. The next planning service monitoring report will be in November 2016.

Gavin Miles

May 2016

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