
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 to the end of Quarter 2 of 2019/20 and wider planning service work delivery.

Recommendation

That the Committee:

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

Background

1. The CNPA Planning Service produces biannual performance reports to monitor planning service performance 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 and the Scottish Government's feedback on PPF reports. The Planning Committee's last planning service performance update was in June 2019.

Planning Service Performance Update to Quarter 3 2019/20

Determination timescales and processing agreements

2. The CNPA's use of processing agreements continues to be a good way to provide certainty for applicants and for CNPA staff. During the final two quarters of 2018/19, 70% of all the planning applications determined by the CNPA had processing agreements. The agreed timescales were met on 70% of these applications. The average time for determination of planning applications with a processing agreement was nearly 35 weeks, significantly slower than during the first two months of the year. However, this reporting period included the issue of decision notices for a number of long standing applications with legal agreements that took a long time to complete,

including An Camas Mor, and quarries at Broomhill and Dalwhinnie, which significantly influence the overall average.

3. The use of processing agreements is reflected in the official statistics produced by the Scottish Government, which exclude timescales for applications with processing agreements. Figures 1 and 2 show the official statistics for applications that did not have processing agreements and the fact that during quarters 1 and 2 of 2019/20, only six applications were determined that did not have processing agreements and the average time for determination was less than 10 weeks.

Figure 1

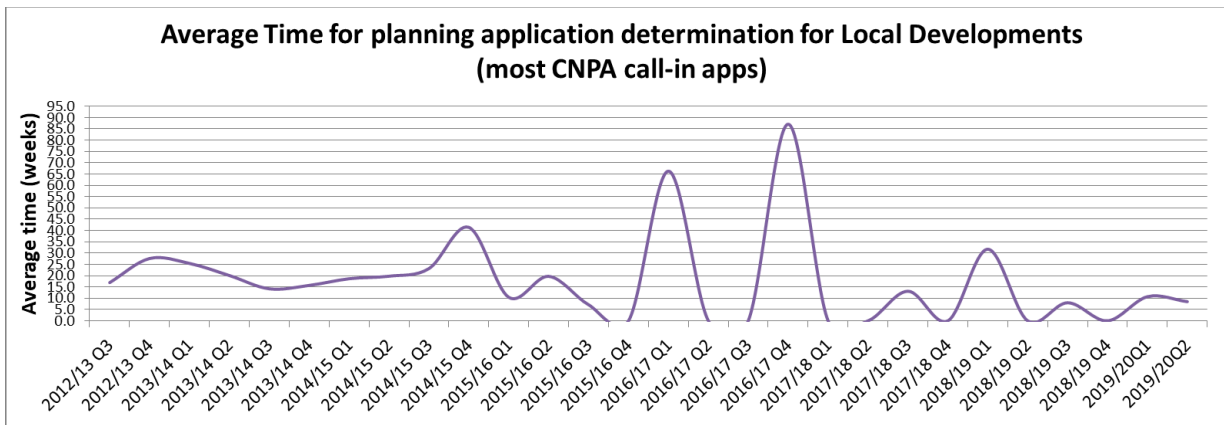
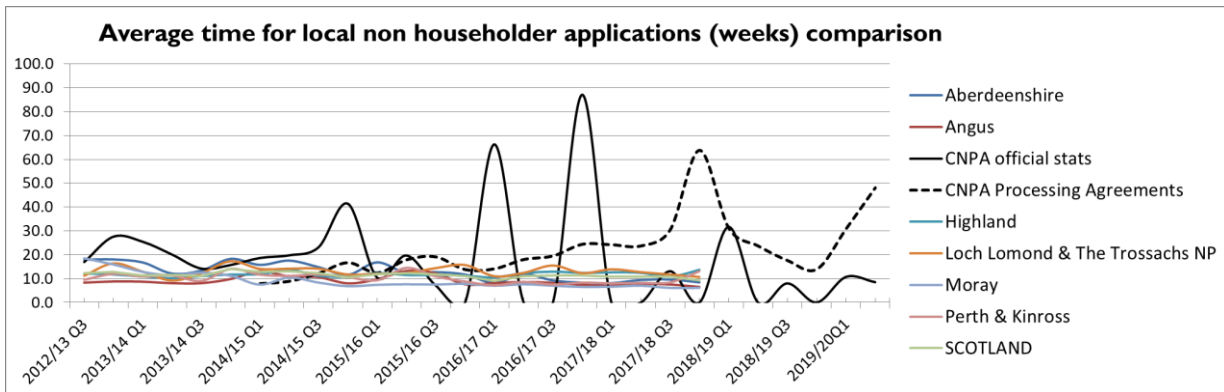
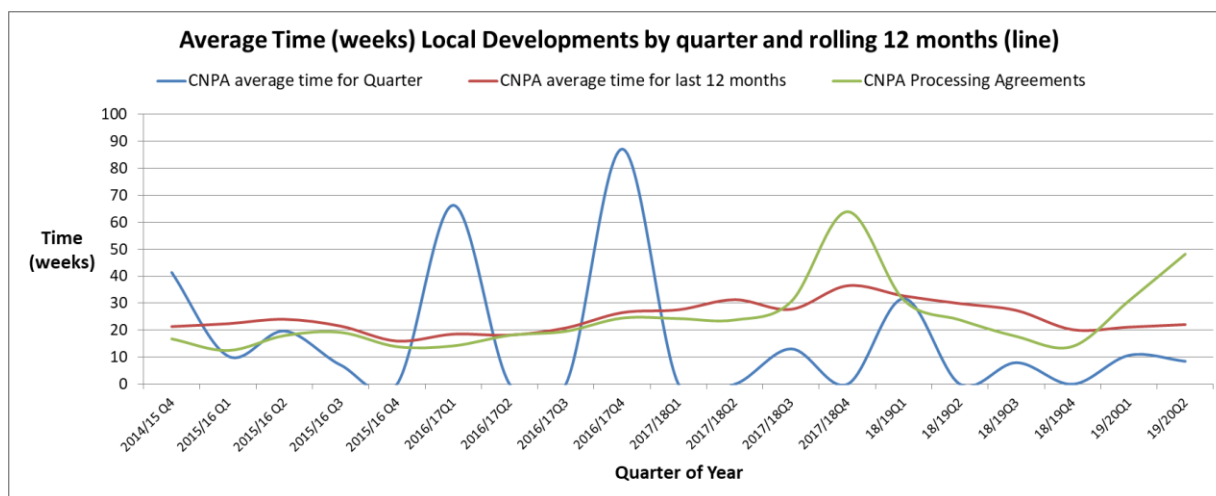


Figure 2



4. 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 3 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, but given the small number of applications that are being recorded in this way, the data is easily misunderstood. The increasing timescales for the applications with processing agreements and the rolling average are explained in factors in the paragraphs above.

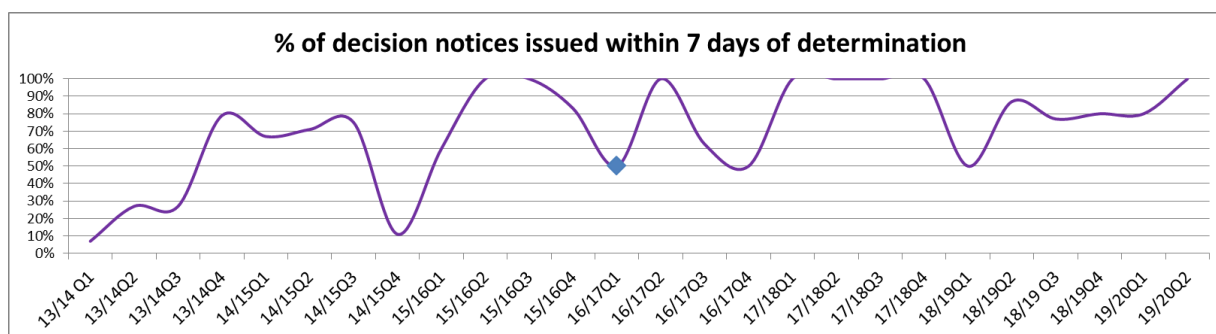
Figure 3



Issuing decision notices

- The planning service has continued to maintain a pattern of swift decision notice production following planning committee decisions.

Figure 4



Proposed Local Development Plan Examination Update

- The CNPA sent unresolved representations on the proposed LDP to the Scottish Government Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) for examination on 20 September 2019. On 3 December we received notice from the DPEA that reporters have been appointed to examine the LDP. The reporters’ first task is to examine the conformity of the participation statement prepared by the CNPA that explains how we consulted on it. The earliest date that the reporters will start to examine the issues raised in representations (set out in the ‘Schedule 4’ prepared by the CNPA) will be 31 December 2019, so we expect much of the examination to take place in the early part of 2020.

Enforcement Update

- As the Planning Committee are aware the CNPA has committed to increasing our monitoring of hill tracks and raising awareness of policy amongst estates and land

managers. The CNPA has a large number of live investigations into potential breaches that are not reported in public because to do so could undermine potential formal enforcement action and ultimately, possible prosecution of associated offences. The frequency of retrospective planning applications for track improvements to the Planning Committee provides an indication of the monitoring work, and investigations, as well as queries from members of the public.

8. To support this work, the CNPA employed an intern during the summer of 2019 to undertake a comprehensive mapping exercise of existing tracks across the moorland and hills of the National Park using the most up to date aerial photography and satellite imagery. The data is currently being checked, but once completed, the mapping will provide a good baseline from which to monitor change. It will include all the long-established tracks, those that have been authorised through applications for planning permission, prior notification or prior approval, and will attempt to map the well-established or obvious ATV track lines. Our intention is that once the mapping is completed and the data is appropriately classified and qualified, it will be available in public as well as for the CNPA's use.

Planning Service Improvements 2019/20

9. The Planning Committee approved five improvement priorities for the planning service during 2019/20 at the 25 April 2019 meeting. Work is underway on all of these priorities.

2019/20 Planning Service Improvements		Status
1	<p>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements.</p> <p>Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p>	<p>Work ongoing. Expect to consult on draft Supplementary guidance for LDP 2 in early 2020</p>
2	<p>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme.</p> <p>In addition to work with local secondary Schools, we will ask the emerging Cairngorms Youth Action Group to help co-design a programme with young people.</p>	<p>Work with Cairngorms Youth Action Group planned for March 2020</p>
3	<p>Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</p> <p>Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park to be held autumn 2019.</p>	<p>Completed November 2019</p>

2019/20 Planning Service Improvements		Status
4	<p>Undertake a monitoring scheme on holiday and second home ownership, changes of use from residential property and impacts on communities.</p> <p>The development of the LDP has increased awareness of the changes in use of residential property to short term holiday letting property. The data available through council tax and non-domestic rates records requires some ground trothing for accuracy and the CNPA will undertake some additional monitoring of newly completed housing developments. We will also publish a Planning Advice Note to explain the rules on use and changes of use.</p>	Investigations into data availability
5	<p>Increase our monitoring of hill tracks development and awareness of policy amongst estates and land managers.</p> <p>Our monitoring and enforcement of unauthorised hill tracks has increased over the past three years. During 2019/20 we will complete a monitoring project using aerial photography and will provide further guidance for estates and land managers.</p>	Work ongoing

Next Report

10. The next planning service monitoring report will be in June 2020.

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