

---

## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

---

### FOR INFORMATION

**Title: PLANNING SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

**Prepared by: Gavin Miles, Head of Planning and Communities**

#### **Purpose**

To update and inform the Committee on the statistical performance of the CNPA planning service to Quarter 2 of 2018/19.

#### **Recommendation**

##### **That the Committee:**

- i. Note the performance of the CNPA's Planning Service as demonstrated by the 2017/18 Planning Performance Framework and 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 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 May 2018.

#### **Planning Performance Report 2017/18**

2. The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was developed between Scottish Government and Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) as a way of stimulating improvements in planning services across Scotland and assessing statistical performance and the quality of the service.
3. CNPA's 2017/18 PPF was submitted to Scottish Government on 27 July 2018. The report is published online at [https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CNPAPlanningPerformanceFrameworkReport17\\_18Final.pdf](https://cairngorms.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CNPAPlanningPerformanceFrameworkReport17_18Final.pdf).
4. The PPF report is a good reflection of the range of hard work that was undertaken to improve performance across the planning service during 2017/18. We have not yet

received the Scottish Government’s feedback on the PPF report but will update the Planning Committee as soon as it is available.

## Planning Service Performance Update to Quarter 2 2018/19

### Determination timescales and processing agreements

- The CNPA’s use of processing agreements continues to be a good way to provide certainty for applicants and for CNPA staff. During the first two quarters of 2018/19, 93% of all the planning applications determined by the CNPA had processing agreements. The agreed timescales were met on 86% of these applications. The average time for determination of planning applications with a processing agreement was 26.4 weeks
- 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 sharp increases in determination timescales when single complex applications that did not have processing agreements were completed with decision notices.

Figure 1

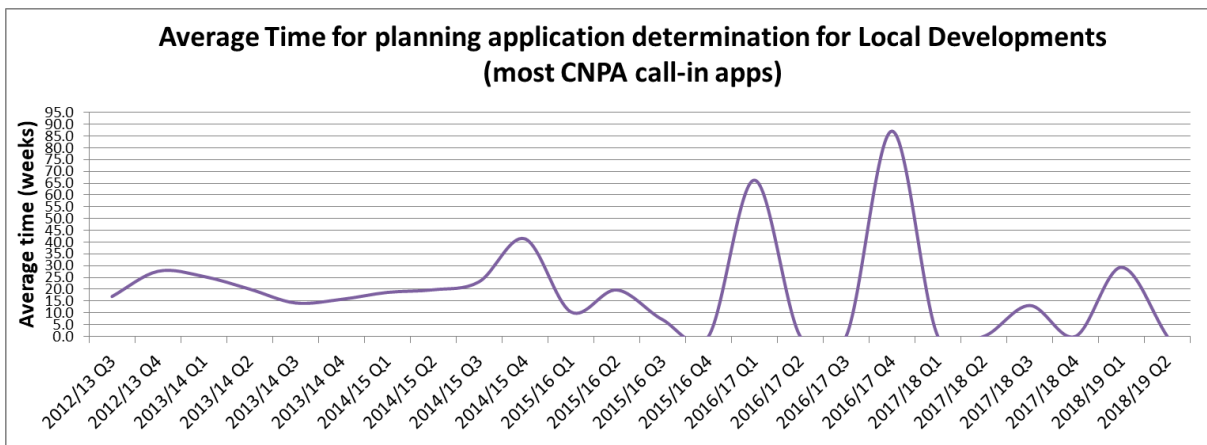
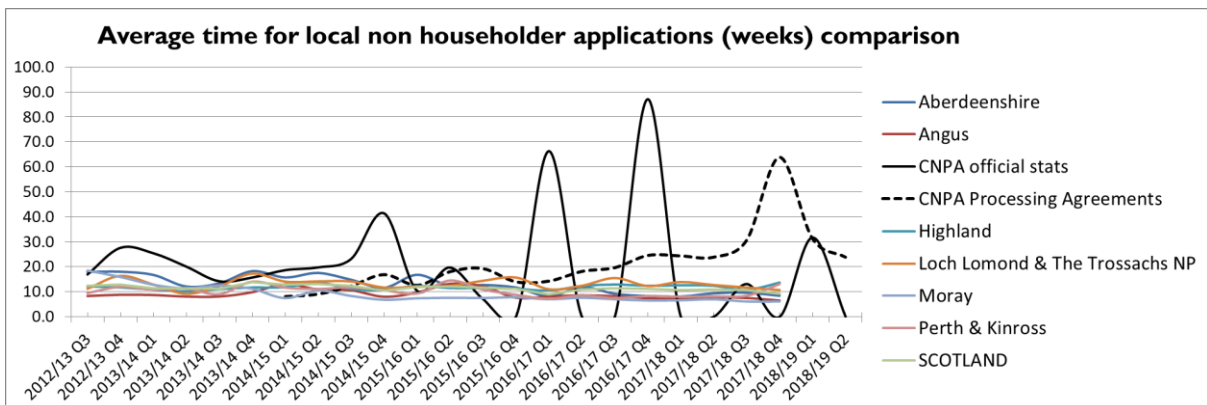


Figure 2

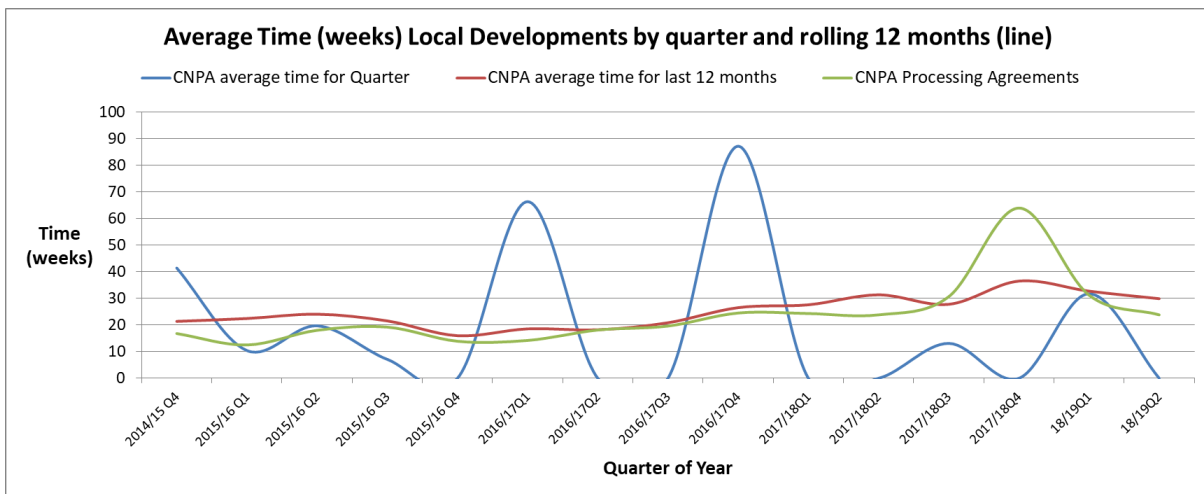


- Although the use of processing agreements has been an effective way of managing cases and providing certainty for applicants as well as the CNPA, there is a clear trend

of processing timescales extending over time within processing agreements. This was particularly evident during the latter part of 2017/18. This has generally been because applicants seek extensions of time from the original agreement in order to provide the information needed to determine their application. We are continuing to look at ways of drawing such applications to a faster conclusion.

8. 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.

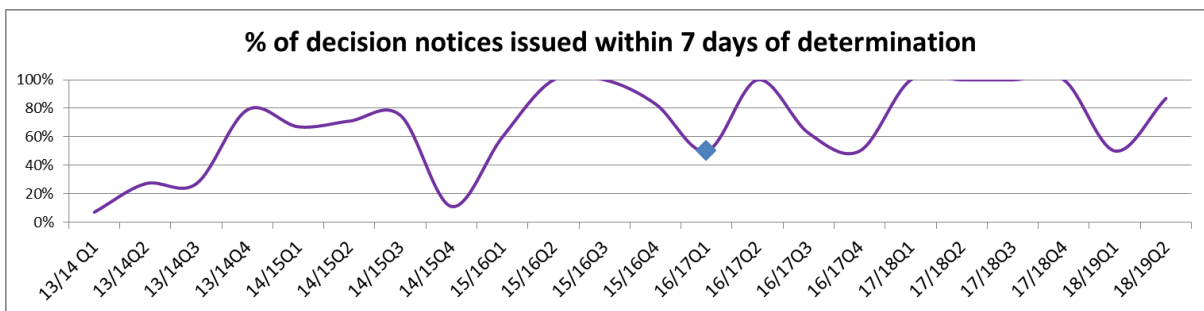
**Figure 3**



**Issuing decision notices**

9. The planning service has continued to maintain a pattern of swift decision notice production following planning committee decisions. There was a dip in the first quarter of 2018/19 when decisions notices could not be issued until the applicant had paid advertising fees or completed planning contributions.

**Figure 4**



## Planning Service Improvements 2018/19

10. The Planning Committee approved 6 improvement priorities for the planning service during 2018/19 at the 20 April 2018 meeting. Work is underway on all of these priorities.

<b>2018/19 Planning Service Improvements</b>		<b>Status</b>
1	<p><b>Simplify mechanisms for securing planning obligations and reduce need for planning agreements</b>                      Establishing simpler, cheaper and faster ways of securing necessary planning obligations</p>	Work ongoing
2	<p><b>Develop and deliver a schools engagement / involvement programme</b>                      As part of the CNPA's approach to involving young people during the year of young people</p>	Planning underway
3	<p><b>Plan and deliver workshop on natural heritage with SNH, SEPA and Local Authorities</b>                      Sharing good practice and ensuring consistent application of policy and practice across the National Park</p>	Planning underway
4	<p><b>Increase participation and engagement in the consultation on the proposed Local Development Plan</b>                      Using what we have learnt from recent consultations to increase informed comment on important issues</p>	Planning for consultation underway
5	<p><b>Consolidate past improvements and procedures</b>                      For the past two years, the planning team has set ambitious service improvement priorities. At a time when we have also recruited a number of new staff, embedding changes requires consistent work and effort. We think that there is more work to do to gain the full benefit of the past years' service priorities such as our Planning Committee training programme, approach to monitoring and enforcement activity, using our new customer feedback processes etc</p>	Work ongoing
6	<p><b>Explore efficiencies in delivery of the CNPA's planning monitoring and enforcement role and outdoor access authority roles</b>                      There are clear comparisons between some of the work of the planning team and outdoor access teams and this work will explore whether shared systems or procedures can create efficiencies in cost or time</p>	Work ongoing

## Next Report

11. The next planning service monitoring report will be in May 2019. We will also report Scottish Government feedback on our 2017/18 PPF report at the earliest available Planning Committee after it is received.

**Gavin Miles**  
**December 2018**

[gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk](mailto:gavinmiles@cairngorms.co.uk)