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## CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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### FOR INFORMATION

**Title:** PLANNING SERVICE PERFORMANCE UPDATE

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Planning Manager.

#### Purpose

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

#### Recommendations

##### That the Committee:

- i. **Note the generally improving performance of the CNPA Planning Service demonstrated by the Planning Service performance report in Annex I.**

#### 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. In August 2014, the Planning Committee received the first of what we intended to be six-monthly information reports based on the quarterly monitoring, with the second scheduled for January/February 2015. The volume of work on the LDP meant that we could not meet that schedule, so this report is to bring the Committee up to date. These information papers supplement the full the reporting of the Planning Service activities that is within the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report that we submit to Scottish Government and which the Committee will be asked to approve in June 2015. As the Committee approved Planning Service improvement priorities with a review of 2014/15's priorities at the Planning Committee on 17 April 2015, they have not been included in this information paper.

#### Key points

2. The report in Appendix I provides statistical information about the performance of CNPA Planning Service and summary highlights of activity on a quarterly basis. The report covers all parts of the Service including Development Planning, Development Management, Enforcement and Service Improvement. Members will be aware that

statistical performance is only one measure of the quality of service, and that the CNPA deals only with the planning applications within the Park that are of general significance to the aims of the Park.

3. Key points from the report include:

- (a) Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted by CNPA board on 27 March 2015.
- (b) CNPA determined more applications than it called-in in each quarter of 2014/15.
- (c) The CNPA has now determined all the legacy cases.
- (d) Determination timescales for local developments have slowed over the last two quarters. This is partly because the CNPA has been moving legacy cases to determination.
- (e) The official statistics that Scottish Government will publish for CNPA will still appear worse for quarter 4 (average of 33.3 weeks to decision notice) somewhat ironically because the CNPA has successfully been using processing agreements on many of the applications determined during that quarter. Where a processing agreement is used, the statistics are not used in the Scottish Government's calculations. However, the average time for the 10 applications where processing agreements were used was actually 16.8 weeks, around half the time of the other applications. In all but one of those cases the timescales of the processing agreement were met. This shows both that the uptake of the processing agreements offered by CNPA is increasing and should demonstrate the value in terms of efficient processing to applicants. We will make this point in our PPF report next month.
- (f) In addition to the increased use of processing agreements, more of the applications determined in quarter 4 had been subject to pre-application advice than in any other period of 2014/15.
- (g) The Planning Team has worked hard over the past year to ensure a swift issue of decision notices following Planning Committee decisions with an internal target of 7 day turnaround. Because of the late December Planning Committee on 18th December 2014, where a relatively high number (11) of applications were determined, a number of decision notices were delayed in their release until January 2015. Further delays were then incurred due to critical staff with appropriate training being off sick and on leave. This issue has been addressed such that we would not now expect to see delays of this nature in future where similar circumstances prevailed.
- (h) Informal enforcement activity has been leading to successful resolution of breaches in planning permissions and preparations have made to take formal action in one case.

**Next reports**

4. The Planning Committee will be asked to approve CNPA's Planning Performance Framework report for Scottish Government in June 2015 and will be given another Planning Service Performance Update in January 2015.

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