

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 3 December 2015

Corporate Performance Framework: Performance to September 2015

Item number	10.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

Executive summary

This report provides an update on Planning and Building Standards performance against strategic outcomes and performance targets. The report is presented in accordance with the Council's Performance Framework approved by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in June 2015. In addition, the report sets out the Scottish Government's response to the Council's Planning Performance Framework report for 2014-15, as well as an overview of performance covering the period to September 2015.

Links

[Coalition pledges](#)
[Council outcomes](#)
[Single Outcome Agreement](#)

Corporate Performance Framework: Performance to September 2015

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Planning Committee:
 - (a) notes the performance for the period to September 2015; and
 - (b) notes the Planning Performance Framework feedback from the Scottish Government.

Background

- 2.1 The [‘Review of political management arrangements’](#) report to the City of Edinburgh Council, on 24 October 2013, approved a number of revisions to committee business. It was agreed by Council that performance monitoring, review, and scrutiny will be led by the Executive Committees on a bi-annual basis with oversight by the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.
- 2.2 This report provides an update on Planning and Building Standards performance against the strategic outcomes and performance targets for the period April to September 2015.
- 2.3 This report also sets out Scottish Government’s feedback on the Council’s Planning Performance Framework submission for 2014-2015.
- 2.4 The report then reviews the current Service Plan 2015-2016 in the light of the Scottish Government feedback received, current performance and the changing priorities of the Service.

Main report

- 3.1 The Council’s Business Plan for 2015-18 is built around a single vision for the city, shared with all partners. To deliver this vision, Council services focus their work around three, overlapping strategic themes. These themes define the priorities for Council services and set out the commitment to improve quality of life, ensure economic vitality and build excellent places.
- 3.2 The Council’s Performance Framework is set out in the diagram in Appendix 1 and takes account of the Council’s vision for the city, and the three strategic themes which guide the work of all services. Across all these themes, the

Council is committed to providing best value for the people of Edinburgh and to deliver lean and agile services.

- 3.3 This report provides a performance update on Planning and Building Standards outcomes under the Council strategic themes: to ensure economic vitality and to build excellent places.
- 3.4 The corporate dashboard in [Appendix 1](#) provides an overview of performance in meeting these outcomes to September 2015. This illustrates that the performance target is being achieved for householder developments whilst non-householder and listed building applications have not achieved their targets for the year to date. Remedial actions are discussed in terms of the current Service Plan section below.

Planning Performance Framework

- 3.5 The Scottish Government has reviewed our Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2014-2015 against the 15 performance markers – see Appendix 2. Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) has also produced wider feedback on the more qualitative issues and case studies, through the SOLACE benchmarking group arrangements.
- 3.6 The feedback report illustrates that our initiatives to deliver continuous improvement are recognised and our efforts to meet Scottish Government priorities are clear. The underlying challenges in improving application decision times remain but the PPF seeks to present a more balanced view of the quality of service we provide, particularly in pre-application advice, customer relations, and project management through processing agreements.
- 3.7 The two red ratings for the PPF 2014-2015, are for the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Development Plan Scheme. Due to the Plan's examination programme, it is unlikely that it will be adopted by the 31 March 2016 deadline for the next PPF report. The Development Plan Scheme was red as further evidence was required to illustrate the project management of the LDP process.
- 3.8 The four amber ratings relate to markers for decision making timescales, legacy cases, advice to support applications and continuous improvement.
- 3.9 Progress on decision making timescales is summarised as follows.
 - a) Major Developments performance has been improving over the last three years: average decision making timescales have substantially decreased from 81.6 weeks in 2012-13 to 26.5 weeks in 2014-15 against a Scottish average of 46.4 for 2014-15.
 - b) Local (non-householder) developments have shown a slight downward trend from 10.5 weeks in 2012-2013 to 11.6 in 2014-2015, but is still above the Scottish average of 12.9 in 2014-2015.

- c) Householder developments have also shown a slight downward trend from 6.9 in 2012-2013 to 7.7 in 2014-15, which is similar to the Scottish average of 7.5 for 2014-2015.
- 3.10 Progress on resolving legacy cases to clear the backlog over the past year was acknowledged and further progress is set out below. Planning Committee recently approved procedures to try and prevent new legacy cases being created. These are likely to show a more positive outcome in next year's PPF, and will have positive implications for the average decision making timescales too.
- 3.11 The marker on regular and proportionate policy guidance is amber due to one area relating to validation guidance. The Scottish Government recognises that work is ongoing in this area. The validation process is to be the subject of a lean review and this will lead to revised guidance to make it clearer to our customers what is needed when they submit a planning application.
- 3.12 The marker on continuous improvement summarises overall progress and has been discussed with the Council's benchmarking partners. Both the Scottish Government and benchmarking partners recognise good progress in service improvement and a good range of ambitious commitments for the year ahead. To maintain momentum, there is a clear priority to focus on decision making timescales as well as ensuring our Service Plan priorities continue to reflect the needs of service users and will contribute to improving our 'RAG' status in next year's PPF.

Service Plan 2015-2016 – Six Month Update

- 3.13 Monitoring of the Planning and Building Standards Service Plan 2015-2016 shows progress towards the performance targets. Initiatives to promote placemaking (reported to Planning Committee in October 2015), and to improve customer engagement (reported separately to this Committee meeting), are on target. The use of lean reviews of statutory processes to improve service delivery is underway and will focus on priority areas of Building Standards and Validation in the next few months.
- 3.14 The public examination of the Local Development Plan is still expected to report by end February 2016 and whilst the process can be streamlined for the adoption stages, it is not anticipated that it can be adopted by end of March 2016.
- 3.15 Since April 2015, the focus on legacy cases, (dormant applications over 3 years old,) has reduced the number of cases from 203 to 168 outstanding, with 15 intention to withdraw letters issued and legal agreement cases being reported to the Development Management Sub Committee for a decision. This will impact on the application decision making timescales for this year but clearing the backlog is a priority, as highlighted in the PPF.
- 3.16 Application decision making timescales are also impacted by the 5% increased volume of applications over the April – September period this year; and the need

to refine consultation procedures with other services. That said, it is encouraging to note the householder planning application target has been exceeded in the period to end September (92%) and performance on the non-householder applications (67.6%), whilst still below target, is improving from its lowest point of 53.9% in Q1 2014.

- 3.17 Building Standards performance against the Scottish Government targets has declined over the last six months, due to a combination of a 17% increase in applications and an increase in the complexity of the workload due to a greater number of major developments underway in the city. Staff overtime has been used to cover recruitment shortages in the interim. A change in Building Standards regulations and fee increases from October 2015 resulted in a huge spike in warrant applications received (almost five times the monthly average) which will have temporary repercussions for processing these warrants in accordance with the Scottish Government target timescales. This is recognised to be a temporary issue across all Scottish local authorities and is being addressed locally by an action plan which contains measures discussed with representatives of agents as service users.

Measures of success

- 4.1 This report provides detail on Council performance against delivery planning outcomes for the period to September 2015.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The financial impact is set out within the Council's Performance Framework.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact is integrated within the Council's Performance Framework.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation is integrated within the Council's Performance Framework.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The sustainability impact is set out within the Council's Performance Framework.

Consultation and engagement

9.1 Priorities and outcomes have been developed in consultation with stakeholders.

Background reading/external references

Background reading / external references

The [Council's Performance Framework](#) approved by Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 9 June 2015.

John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Catriona Reece-Heal, Business Manager for Planning and Building Standards

E-mail: Catriona.reece-heal@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 6123

Contact: Jo McStay, Business Intelligence Manager

E-mail: jo.mcstay@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 7950

Links

Coalition pledges	P40 - Work with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and other stakeholders to conserve the city's built heritage
Council outcomes	CO05 - Business growth and investment
Single Outcome Agreement	
Appendices	Appendix 1: Corporate Dashboard – Performance to September 2015 Appendix 2: Planning Performance Framework Performance Markers Report

Appendix 1: Corporate Dashboard - Performance to September 2015

Vision for our city

Edinburgh is a thriving, sustainable capital city in which all forms of deprivation and inequality are reduced

Strategic themes

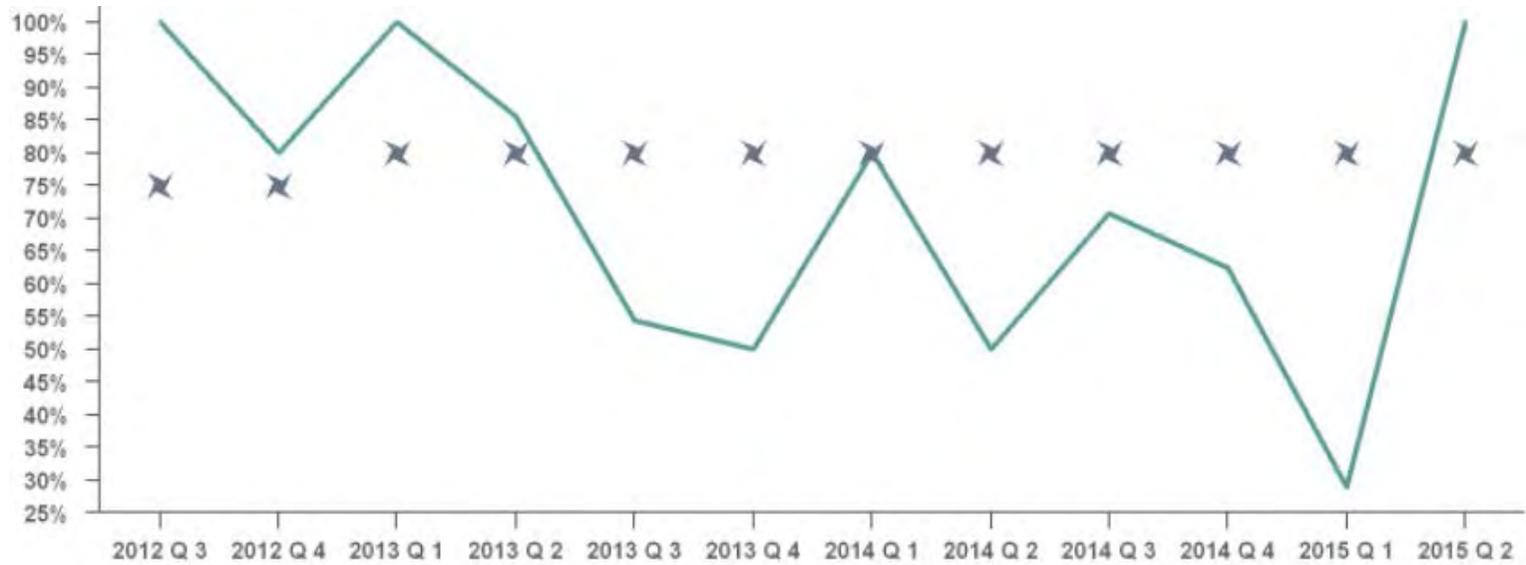
Improve quality of life

Ensure economic vitality

Build excellent places

Deliver lean and agile Council services

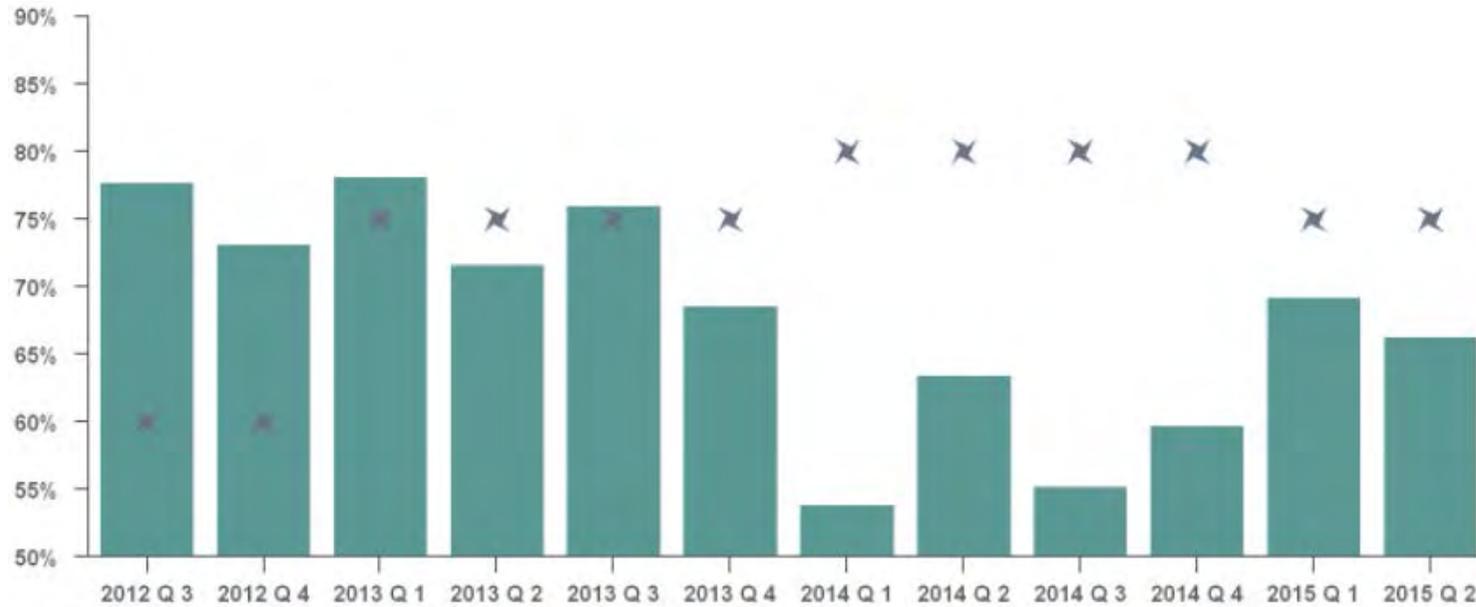
% of major application decisions within target



	2012 Q3	2012 Q4	2013 Q1	2013 Q2	2013 Q3	2013 Q4	2014 Q1	2014 Q2	2014 Q3	2014 Q4	2015 Q1	2015 Q2
Actual	100%	80%	100%	85.7%	54.5%	50%	80%	50%	70.8%	62.5%	29%	100%
Target	75%	75%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%

Notes:
None

● % of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months

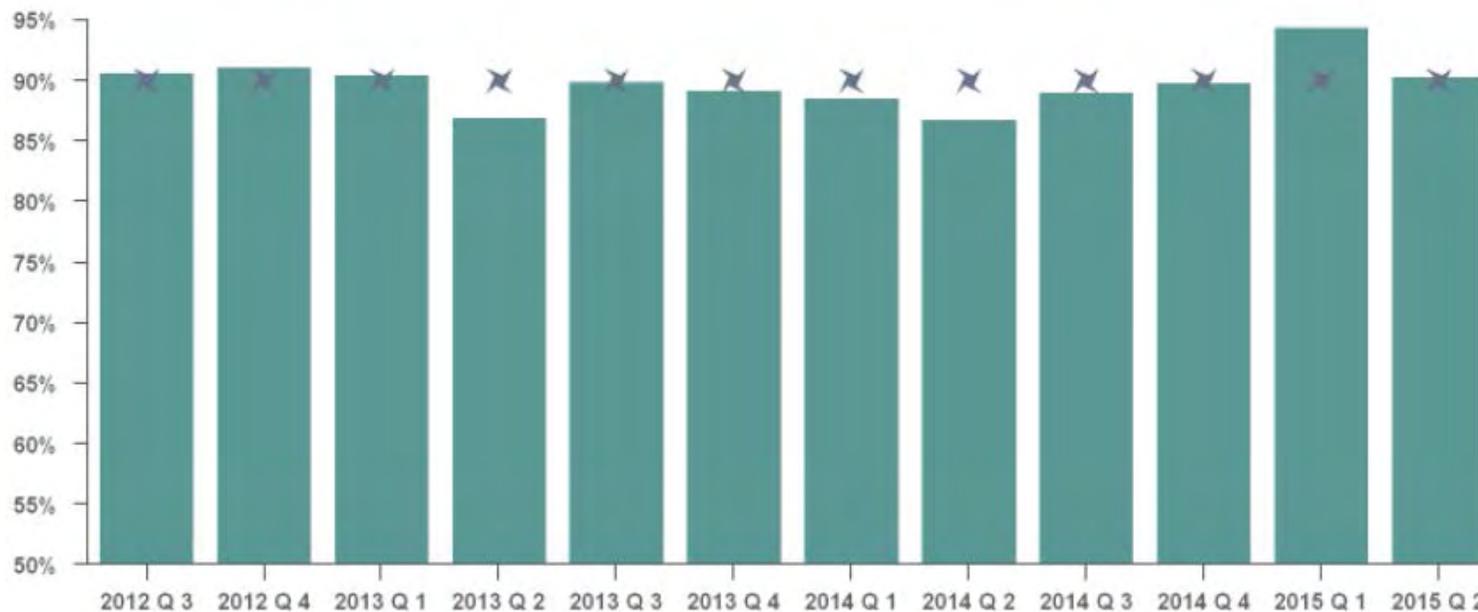


	2012 Q3	2012 Q4	2013 Q1	2013 Q2	2013 Q3	2013 Q4	2014 Q1	2014 Q2	2014 Q3	2014 Q4	2015 Q1	2015 Q2
Actual	77.7%	73.1%	78.1%	71.6%	76%	68.6%	53.9%	63.4%	55.2%	59.7%	69.2%	65.9%
Target	60%	60%	75%	75%	75%	75%	80%	80%	80%	80%	75%	75%

Notes:

Performance has been affected by an increase in the number of non-householder applications received, a 17% increase on the same period in 2014/15 and the relative complexity of many of those applications. A programme of remedial measures is being implemented through channel shift, lean reviews and recruitment although the impacts may not be evident immediately.

% of householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months



	2012 Q3	2012 Q4	2013 Q1	2013 Q2	2013 Q3	2013 Q4	2014 Q1	2014 Q2	2014 Q3	2014 Q4	2015 Q1	2015 Q2
Actual	90.6%	91.1%	90.5%	86.9%	89.9%	89.2%	88.5%	86.8%	89%	89.8%	94.4%	90%
Target	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Notes:
None

Appendix 2: PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2014-15

Name of planning authority: **City of Edinburgh Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Amber	<p>Major Developments</p> <p>A slight improvement in decision making timescales from 27.9 to 26.5 over the year, which is still better than the national average of 46.4 weeks.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder)</p> <p>Timescales have lengthened slightly from 10.7 weeks last year to 11.6 weeks this year, however this is still quicker than the national average of 12.9 weeks.</p> <p>RAG = Amber</p> <p>Householder Development</p> <p>Timescales have lengthened slightly from 7.5 weeks to 7.7 weeks, this now takes you to slightly longer decision times than the national average of 7.5 weeks.</p> <p>RAG = Red</p> <p>TOTAL RAG = Amber</p>
2	<p>Processing agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>Processing agreements continue to be offered for all major applications.</p> <p>20 out of 33 major applications subject to a processing agreement with 80% meeting the timescales set out. Good evidence of using agreements for local developments as well.</p> <p>Availability and template published on website.</p>

3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <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	<p>You have increased the number of applications which were subject to pre-application discussions from 23% up to 36%. You have indicated that you will be refocusing the pre-app service to focus on major and complex local applications with guidance produced for more straightforward applications.</p> <p>You have provided good evidence of the approach you take to ensure that information requests are clear and proportionate for applicants for instance through the convening of case conferences.</p>
4	<p>Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period) 	Green	<p>Timescales improving for major applications, taking on average 29.8 weeks compared to 33.4 weeks last year. Local applications with a legal agreement have increased to 33.1 weeks from 25.7 weeks last year. Both remain quicker than the national average.</p> <p>You have committed to reviewing current practice to help speed up the process however, you have noted that you are content to hold applications until applicants are ready to sign a legal agreement.</p>
5	<p>Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years</p>	Green	<p>Charter published August 2013</p>
6	<p>Continuous improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	<p>You have reduced the time taken to decide major applications however the time taken to decide both local and householder applications has increased. You have a good record of providing pre-application discussions and using processing agreements. However your LDP is out of date.</p> <p>You have completed the majority of your commitments for last year and have made a good range of ambitious commitments for the year ahead.</p>
7	<p>Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption</p>	Red	<p>Both local plans are over 5 years old.</p>
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 	Red	<p>Your LDP will not be adopted within the required 5 year timescale and has been delayed by the requirement to consult on a second proposed plan.</p> <p>You have provided a good explanation of the processes you have gone through however you have provided little evidence of your approach to project managing the LDP</p>

			process.
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	n/a	
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	n/a	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information required to support applications; and • expected developer contributions 	Amber	<p>You have produced validation guidance which covers supporting information requirements. You intend to extend this guidance to provide clarity on requirements for different types of applications.</p> <p>RAG = Amber</p> <p>Your LDP Action Programme outlines infrastructure requirements and you have 2 planning obligations officers who are involved in the application process from the outset.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p>
12	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	<p>You have a range of protocols in place with other council services and other new ones close to finalisation. You have provided good examples of working with the Edinburgh Biodiversity partnership, flooding and environmental assessment colleagues and collaboration through the Edinburgh 12 initiative. You have also convened a LDP Action Group which brings together a range of cross service stakeholders.</p>
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	<p>You have provided a range of examples of sharing good practice on subjects such as social media. You also engage in a number of groups and forums including the Edinburgh Civic Forum and Edinburgh Developers Forum who were both invited to provide feedback on your previous PPF report. You have mentioned that you participate in benchmarking and regular liaison with Glasgow City Council and your SOLACE benchmarking groups.</p>

14	<p>Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old</p>	Amber	<p>You have cleared 66 cases within the last year however, there are a high number (203) of cases remaining. It is noted that a new process has been implemented in the current year and we look forward to hearing about the impact this has had in your next report.</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	<p>Your LDP action programme details the infrastructure requirements for allocated sites alongside costings, responsibility for delivery, funding options and contribution requirements.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Officers are involved early on in the process to set out any potential developer contributions and you have increased this resource to 2 officers.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p>

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
Performance against Key Markers

Marker		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
1	Decision making timescales			
2	Processing agreements			
3	Early collaboration			
4	Legal agreements			
5	Enforcement charter			
6	Continuous improvement			
7	Local development plan			
8	Development plan scheme			
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications			
12	Corporate working across services			
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge			
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases			
15	Developer contributions			

Overall Markings (total numbers for red, amber and green)

	Red	Amber	Green
2012-13	2	4	7
2013-14	1	5	7
2014-15	2	4	7

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2014-15 Scottish Average
Major Development	81.6	27.9	26.5	46.4
Local Householder Development (Non-	10.5	10.7	11.6	12.9
Householder Development	6.9	7.5	7.7	7.5