

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**PLANNING & TRANSPORT DIVISION**

**IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2011 – 2012**



The Delivering Planning Reform document issued by the Scottish Government in October 2008, requires that Planning Authorities will identify areas for service improvement and how best they be tackled. This process will then be repeated on an annual basis. The Angus Council Improvement Plan for the period 2009 – 2010 was derived largely from a best value review of the development management function which was undertaken throughout 2008.

Scottish Government subsequently provided some further guidance on their expectations in relation to format and content to HOPS in November 2009. The Improvement Plan for 2010 – 2011 was adapted to reflect the format advocated by Scottish Government and took into account the Planning & Transport Division's Operational Plan.

The Improvement Plan for 2011-2012 follows the approach adopted by the previous Improvement Plan for 2010-2011 and its content emanates from a number of sources including the Planning & Transport Division Operational Plan. The Improvement Plan reports on actions taken in the context of delivering planning reform including those taken over the previous year. The impact of those actions upon service delivery is reported and actions for the coming year that are either ongoing or planned are identified.

## **Proportionate and Practical Planning Policies**

The Dundee and Angus Structure Plan was approved in 2002 and covers the period 2002 – 2016. The council is currently working with Fife, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Council's in the preparation of a new strategic development plan (TAYplan).

The Angus Local Plan Review was adopted in February 2009 and work has commenced on the preparation of the Angus Local Development Plan which will replace the Angus Local Plan Review.

### What we have done:

- Reviewed supplementary planning guidance in relation to affordable housing in light of current economic climate
- Development Plan Scheme published and reviewed
- Development briefs published
- Contributed to preparation of TAYplan Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report
- Contributed to Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership
- Core Paths Plan prepared and adopted
- Established Improvement Group to review nature and use of planning conditions and the use of policies

### Achievements:

- Up-to-date development plan coverage for Angus

### Future Actions:

- Revised model planning conditions to be introduced
- Revised and formalised development plan monitoring scheme to be introduced
- Develop guidance/ review processes in relation to planning gain
- Prepare conservation area character appraisals
- Publication of Angus Local Development Plan Monitoring Statement, Main Issues Report (MIR) and Environmental Report for consideration
- Publication of Windfarm Locational Framework

- Contribute to publication of TAYplan / proposed Strategic Development Plan

### **Clear and Consistent Planning Advice**

Angus Council places considerable importance on serving the needs of its customers. As part of that the provision of clear and consistent planning advice is an important element. Angus Council is committed to the communication and sharing of good practice and whenever possible will adopt a solution based approach.

#### What we have done:

- Liaison with Cairngorms National Park Authority and constituent authorities
- Initial review and restructure of the development management webpage
- Group discussion sessions to review planning applications/ appeal decisions and share knowledge/ develop common understanding of policies
- Established an Officer/Member Group to implement the Design Agenda and raise awareness
- Establish shared experiences group with neighbouring authorities

#### Achievements:

- Continued reduction in number of appeals sustained (less than 25%)

#### Future Actions:

- Further develop planning web pages to increase/ improve access to information
- Provide information to developer forum on revised householder permitted development rights
- Provide information to developer forum on council approach to flooding and drainage issues
- Provide information to developer forum on emerging development plan framework
- Introduce system to monitor the provision of pre application advice
- Make the Windfarm Locational Framework available to the public through the on line Development Plan Interactive Proposals Map

## **Effective and Efficient Planning Processes**

Angus Council has held developer forums over the past year to provide information on the new planning regulations and development plan framework. Similar forums have been held as part of Member training on the implementation of the new Act, scheme of delegation etc. Internal business processes have been adapted to accommodate electronic submission of planning applications in response to the Planning Act and secondary legislation. Within the last year the use of technology has been expanded to enable the submission of development proposals on line as part of the consultation exercise in respect of the Angus Local Development Plan. In addition complaints in respect of enforcement can also be received on line. The new scheme of delegation which was introduced as part of the implementation of the new Planning Act has allowed committee to continue to focus on more significant planning applications which has been a contributory factor in increasing the percentage of planning applications determined within 2-months. For a number of years Angus Council has undertaken Customer Satisfaction Surveys to measure satisfaction levels in respect of the planning application process as experienced by applicant, agents and third party representatives and this will be extended to include informal Pre Application Enquiries. Internal working practices continue to be reviewed to reflect the needs of the council's customers and revised workload monitoring has been introduced to assist in performance improvement.

### What we have done:

- Revised processes and procedures required by Planning Act
- Revised scheme of delegation introduced
- Roles and responsibilities of development management senior officers reviewed
- Revised system for allocation and monitoring of planning application determination timescales
- Established systems to allow electronic submission of planning applications
- Established Officer / Member Working Group to respond to Planning Consultation Papers
- Established Agent/ Officer Focus Group to assist in development of service
- Established Improvement Group to review enforcement processes
- Established Improvement Group to review use of IT and development of E planning
- Consulted with planning agents to identify their priorities in terms of service delivery
- Undertaken Stakeholder Consultation to assist in formulation of main issues and identification of development sites
- Reviewed the planning service through the Angus Improvement Model

### Achievements:

- Maintained a high percentage of all applications determined within 2-months (75% or above)
- Increase in percentage of non-householder applications determined within 2-months (60% or above)
- Maintained a high percentage of householder applications dealt within 2-months (90% or above)
- Maintained high level of customer satisfaction with the Development Standards Service

### Future Actions:

- Commission review of electronic business processed for Development Management service and commission consultancy and training to implement recommendations
- Establish internal protocols for dealing with 'major' planning applications
- Balanced Scorecard approach to be adopted for Development Management service
- Increase access to online planning enforcement information
- Maintain liaison with statutory consultees in order to review and develop consultation arrangements
- Establish Officer /Member Working Group to assist in identification of main issues in respect of the preparation of the Angus Local Development Plan
- Development / Implementation of Angus On Line Development Plan
- Measure customer satisfaction levels in respect of informal Pre Application Enquiries
- Work with Historic Scotland to achieve increased delegation of listed building cases

### **Skills Development and Performance Improvement**

Previous Improvement Plans identified an intention to implement a formal training and development programme for staff. In this regard all staff have had a performance appraisal which has included a training needs analysis and the production of Personal Development Plans. As part of corporate development the Planning Service has undertaken self assessment through the Angus Improvement Model (AIM) which is an evidence based Public Service Improvement Framework which seeks to examine current service delivery, measure performance and identify areas for improvement. In the context of this process the Planning and Transport (AIM) Self Assessment Action Plan which promotes skills development and performance improvement has been adopted. Training has been provided to members and officers on the Planning Act and the Improvement Service has been used to assist in the delivery of design training for both members and officers. In addition officers have attended training/ events on a wide range of matters including development economics, sustainable technology, biodiversity as well as courses in relation to personal development such as time management and effective presentation. Group meetings have been introduced in order to

allow discussion and share experience on consider current planning applications and appeal decisions. The Planning Service has hosted an event to provide community councils with information on the implementation of the Planning Act and to provide clarification on their role in relation to the planning process.

#### What we have done:

- Personal appraisals and training needs assessments
- Preparation of personal development plans
- Training for members and officers
- Training for community councils
- Management training
- Planning staff have undertaken training on designing streets
- Adopted the Planning and Transport (AIM) Self Assessment Action Plan as a vehicle through which performance and service delivery will be improved
- Asked planning agents which aspects of our service they see as a priority

#### Achievements:

- Maintained Investors in People status
- Increased the percentage of applications determined within 2 months in comparison to the previous year.

#### Future Actions:

- Develop IT skills and processes to improve delivery of e-planning
- Take advantage of Planning Development Programme to deliver further training in response to identified training needs
- Take advantage of training opportunities provided by government agencies