
Planning Performance Framework 2013-14

Putting sport first

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

1. Introduction

sportscotland is the national agency for sport. Our vision is a Scotland where sport is a way of life. Our focus is on developing and supporting a world class sporting system. The availability of a network of places, of the right quality and capacity to meet the needs of sport, is crucial to deliver this.

The planning team, comprises a Lead Manager, 2 planners and a countryside planner.

What we do:

The planning team sits within the Facilities Team and has the key work areas of:

- Inputting to the development of spatial policy and legislation in relation to sport.
- Undertaking our role as a statutory consultee.
- Working with partners to plan strategically for their sport and sporting estate.
- Developing the Facilities Planning Model for use at national and local authority level.
- Assessing the need and demand for facilities in relation to capital funding applications.

2. Headline Indicators

Table 1 - Development Plans

Development Plan Engagement	2012-13	2013-14
Pre-main issues report engagement (meeting and/or submission)	4	5
Respond to MIR	6	4
Respond to Strategic/Local Development Plan	7	12
Other pre-draft consultation involvement (input to wording or additional sites consultation)	3	4

Table 2 - Planning applications – Number & Type of response

Response	2012-13	2013-14
No comment/advisory only	8 (15%)	47 (60%)
Recommend grant with conditions	11 (20%)	29 (37%)
Recommend grant	33 (61%)	n/a
Objection or holding objection	2 (4%)	2 (3%)
Total	54	78

Table 3 - Planning applications – response times

	2012-13	2013-14
Average response time (days)	13	10
Responded to within agreed timescales	49 (91%)	77 (99%)

3. Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

a) Open for business

Our team ethos is focused on providing a high quality and efficient service to partners and customers. We are a small team based in one office location which enables ease of information sharing and shared knowledge of expected behaviors.

We have geographic allocations for our staff which means one point of contact for each Planning Authority. The planner with geographic responsibility for an area will work with a range of partners: Council and Leisure Trust partners – planners; sports development and asset management; national and local sports partners and relevant **sportscotland** colleagues in our wider team. As such, staff have strong links to and knowledge of these wider areas, which enables a holistic approach to be taken to involvement in development proposals.

We encourage and make our staff available for pre-application discussions, we did not record the statistics on this but have put in place a system for doing so, starting in the financial year 2014-15.

Our average response time on planning applications of 10 days evidences this focus on efficient service. In the year 2012-13, 91% of planning applications were responded to within agreed timescales, and our aim was for this to be 100% in the financial year 2013-14 (see Table 3). In 2013-14 we achieved 99% of consultations being responded to within agreed timescales, which represents an increase of 8% on the previous year, and is 1% short of our aim. Therefore, in 2014-15, our aim will remain that 100% of applications are responded to within these timescales.

We seek to find solutions to issues in relation to planning applications, evidenced by the small number of objections made (3% of cases), and also seek to request conditions only

where necessary (37% of cases), see Table 2. Please note that in relation to Table 2 we have combined the 'No comment/Recommend grant' consultation responses as these both reflect cases where we have not objected or suggested conditions.

b) High Quality Development on the Ground

We recognise the importance of early engagement in this area. In the 2012-13 we set the aim for engagement in the Development Planning process of holding a meeting with each Council at the pre-Main Issues Report stage. In the year 2013-14, we have had 5 such meetings with Planning Authorities. For all the feedback has been that these have been positive and will reduce the likelihood of issues at Local Development Plan stage. This has picked up most relevant plans, however, as we have had staff changes in our team of 4, we have not done all.

We have undertaken to ensure that our input to Development Plans is proportionate and delivers the outcome of a positive spatial policy approach for delivering sport. We are doing this by tracking our input to Development Plan consultations through the various stages from pre-Main Issues Report to Proposed Plan, and any change to policy which results. Thereafter we will consider whether we should change how we input to these.

We have developed a standard template in relation to our approach to Development Plan engagement. This sets out the key areas of relevance to sport and its spatial requirements, based on the policy areas in the SPP, and sets out what we suggest should be considered in Development Plans. This forms the basis of discussions with Planning Authorities; feedback from Planning Authorities on this template response is that having this information from **sportscotland** has been useful for informing policy development and discussion with ourselves. This will be amended in 2014-15 to take account of the recently published SPP and NPF3.

In addition to Development Plan engagement, we are involved in a range of related local policy development which informs Development Plan policy, such as National Park and core path Plans.

We have recognised in our work with partners some recurring issues, eg around the siting of synthetic pitches, and are undertaking work on a guidance note which provides good practice on this area.

We are currently undertaking a piece of work which will look at our approach to development proposals, the national policy position and some case studies showing outcomes in relation to new or replacement sports provision. This is reflective of the Government's feedback in relation to our 2012-13 Planning Performance Framework Document.

c) Certainty

The benefit of a small team, based in the one location, is that there can be easy sharing of good practice and cases. The team meets on a regular basis to discuss work areas.

In relation to development plans, as noted in section b) above, we have a standard template in terms of our approach to development plans, in order that staff are clear of the areas we wish to engage with. This is being amended given the publication of the revised SPP.

In relation to planning applications, we have a good practice document which sets out the approach that staff should take to planning applications, in order to ensure consistency of approach. This is continually reviewed.

We aim to respond timeously to planning applications referred to us, as evidenced by our response times to planning applications (see Table 3).

The feedback report to our 2012-13 Planning Performance Framework noted that agencies are encouraged to enter into protocols with planning authorities. Given the relatively small number of planning applications we are consulted on, we did not consider it proportionate to enter into these with all planning authorities. We did raise with the Key Agency Group whether consideration could be given to developing a joint protocol but this approach has been previously discounted by the Group, on the basis that it would be difficult to achieve given the wide range of remits in the planning process amongst the Agencies. We will continue to be aware of the benefit of this approach however, and will consider whether, eg in a Council area where we have a large number of applications, this approach could assist.

d) Communications, engagement and customer service

We have developed a document management system to store all correspondence and documents.

We have a database for storing all planning consultations received. This is, however, not in a modern format and we seek to move this to a more user friendly platform. We have not been able to do this as migration of the information is linked to a wider information management system. We have amended our database to distinguish between major and local applications and we have implemented a system of recording pre-application consultations.

We have a recording system for our engagement with development plans. We have also implemented a system for monitoring and seeking to engage with Open Space Strategies and the development of Supplementary Guidance.

As we are a small team, we can fairly easily seek feedback from partners as part of our work. We have also been audited in the past as part of the wider Facilities Team in **sportscotland**. We have appointed an intern who has developed a survey for customer feedback and hope to implement this 2014-15 but a staff resource for doing this has yet to be identified.

We took on board the feedback report on the Planning Performance Framework from 2012-13 and have included relevant contact details for the planning team on our website.

e) Efficient and effective decision making

Our members of staff have clear subject and geographic areas of responsibility. Backed up with standard approaches where relevant, staff are empowered to lead on these areas with referral to the Lead Manager where necessary. Regular communication assists with this.

We have seen with the new Development Plan system the importance of the need for engagement at a very early stage, which we were not always doing in the past, leading to objections from **sportscotland** at the Proposed Plan stage. For those Planning Authorities now involved in preparing a new Plan, we have learned from this experience and are

engaging at an early stage in the process, the aim being to have early resolution of any issues, in advance of the Proposed Plan being prepared (see Table 1 above).

We recognise that some of our guidance (eg on the Facilities Planning Model and on Guidance of Pitch Strategies) is out of date. While the principles are still relevant these need to be updated.

f) Effective Management Structures

We have developed a way of working where each team member has clear roles and responsibilities, along both geographic and subject areas. However, as we are a small team we have sufficient familiarity with all areas of work which enables us to respond to peaks of work in areas where this occurs. We meet as a team on a 6 weekly basis to discuss work areas and on a weekly basis to discuss current planning application consultations and any urgent matters.

The planning team sits within a wider Facilities and Sports Development Team which is similarly arranged along the lines of geographic and subject area responsibility; close working with these colleagues is required to effectively deliver our work areas.

g) Financial Management and local governance

We are governed by general governance applying to **sportscotland**.

The planning team has a budget which we seek to use in helping Councils, Leisure Trusts and Sports Governing bodies take a strategic approach to their sports' facility requirements. As such, our main budget is spent on: delivery and improvement of the Facilities Planning Model (in partnership with Sport England) and contributing to the costs of preparation of Sports Governing Body's facility strategies and Local Authority Pitch and Facility Strategies (we work with partners in the preparation of these). The budget spend is aligned to our Business Plan activity areas around the following activity: provide expert advice, guidance and support to our partners in planning for their facility requirements.

h) Culture of Continuous Improvement

sportscotland involves staff in the development of its Corporate Plan and resulting business plan actions. The planning team is directly engaged in defining their business plan objectives, which are aligned to our Corporate Plan objectives, and for delivering against these work areas.

We have recently revised our staff appraisal process and have in place a new review process which is based on a series of functional and behavioral competencies. This is directly linked to a 'Personal Development Plan' which outlines a staff member's development requirements. Training and learning opportunities are currently being rolled out to deliver development requirements identified in Development Plans for 2014-15. We have implemented an 'ELearning' platform which enables staff to directly access a range of online training as well as booking training opportunities.

As a result of this staff development framework we have been able to access a range of training, not only related to technical planning skills, but also on transferable skills including: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; Positive Psychology; Appreciative Inquiry;

Presentation Techniques; Facilitation Skills and Managing Meetings. Our new team members also received training this year on the use of the Facilities Planning Model

Our team sits within a wider facilities and sports development team and we encourage staff to work closely with colleagues in these areas, in order that they can develop an understanding of the wider sports environment within which they work.

We recognise the importance of sharing experience and learning from others, particularly as we are a small team. To this end we now sit on the Key Agencies Group and this has been helpful for our work, for example, through this Group we were aware of the Government's work in developing the 'Place Standard' and contacted the relevant member of staff in Government to discuss how we could contribute to this.

4. Supporting Evidence

- Monitoring information in relation to planning consultations received.
- Monitoring information in relation to development plan involvement.
- Informal feedback from partners.
- Reporting against our business plan objectives.

5. Delivery of our Service Improvement Plan Actions

No.	Action	Complete/Comments
1	We will engage with all Local Authorities at pre-main issues report stage.	Yes, engaged with a number of Local Authorities (see Table 1).
2	We will update our standard approach for staff in relation to engaging with the development plan system on publication of the revised SPP.	No. The revised SPP was published in financial year 14-15 and will be done as an action in that financial year.
3	We will monitor and engage with SPGs relevant to our area of work.	Yes. We have allocated a member of staff to monitor these and have responded to a number of these, for example, Edinburgh 'Developer Contributions and affordable housing' and Falkirk 'Open Space and new developments'.
4	We will monitor and engage with the development of Open Space Strategies.	Yes. We have allocated a member of staff to monitor these and have responded to a number of these, eg Orkney and Clackmannanshire

		Strategies.
5	We will respond to all planning application consultations within the agreed timescales.	No. We increased the percentage responded to within agreed timescales from 91% to 99%, but did not achieve 100%. This will remain our aim in the coming year.
6	We will move our planning application database to a more user friendly platform. This will include for recording national/major/local development and pre-application enquires.	Partial. We have not moved our database as this awaits completion of other parts of the CRM (Client Relationship Management) database. We have amended the database to record different categories of development.
7	We will implement a system for recording pre-application consultations (2014-15 financial year will be first year reported on).	Yes.
8	We will update our guidance on Pitch Strategy Preparation and the Facilities Planning Model (to be completed end financial year 2015).	These remain a priority.
9	We will prepare guidance on the siting of synthetic grass pitches (to be completed by end 2014).	This is underway.
10	We will ensure staff receive training and learning opportunities identified as part of their appraisal process.	This is ongoing.

6. Service Improvement Actions 2014-15

In the coming year we will:

1. Review our input to development plans to consider the difference our input makes and whether any revision to our approach is need.
2. Prepare a document which outlines our approach to development proposals affecting sports facilities and providing examples in the form of case studies.
3. Implement the customer service survey which has been prepared (staff resource yet to be identified)

These are in addition to the actions rolled forward from the 2012-13 Service Improvement Actions.

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