

Planning Development Programme

The **Planning Development Programme** is a government funded initiative that supports training and development for staff and elected members with planning responsibilities in the 34 Scottish planning authorities.

The Programme has been running since April 2006 and will continue operating until March 2011, providing a range of in-house and open training events and grant support for authorities to help tackle identified training and development needs. Through the Programme the Improvement Service is also working with authorities to improve the management of staff training and development and on a variety of projects linked to skills and knowledge development.

On-going skills and knowledge development is required to implement and sustain the modernised planning system. The aim of the Planning Development Programme is to support the delivery of a modernised planning system by:

- Working with planning authorities to improve internal approaches to learning and development for staff and elected members
- Providing and supporting the provision of a range of learning opportunities linked to identified training and development needs within planning authorities
- Encouraging and supporting the creation of opportunities for sharing knowledge, experience and expertise with and between planning authorities and other relevant organisations.

Most of the activity within the Programme from April 2008 will focus on running **workshops for planning authority staff and elected members on a variety of planning-related topics**. These workshops will mainly be on topics linked to sustainability issues, design awareness and development economics & developer contributions, which are priority themes identified by planning authorities and other stakeholders. The Programme will also support workshops on various specialist technical topics where there are inadequate existing training opportunities.

The Improvement Service is also continuing to provide **grant support** to planning authorities. There are three types of grant available:

- For **local learning events**, where authorities are organising training events for their staff and/ or elected members
- For **access to existing learning opportunities** targeted mainly at remoter authorities with significant travel costs and authorities with severe budgetary constraints limiting access to training
- For officers undertaking **accredited planning qualifications** with sponsorship from their employing authority.

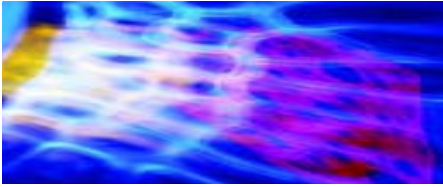
Grants are also available to authorities wishing to purchase a licence for access to PlanningMatters. Application forms for grant support are available on the Improvement Service website.

Alongside the workshop based training events, a series of events to encourage **sharing of experience and good practice** on various planning issues are being introduced in 2008. The purpose of these events is to enable authorities to discuss their experiences, various approaches, successes and lessons learned on a specific topic.

Another new initiative starting this year is the publication of a series of **case studies** on the approach taken by Scottish planning authorities on various issues, for example student placements and graduate training and development.

Through the Planning Development Programme the Improvement Service will be working with employers and other stakeholders on identifying and implementing targeted **training and development support for graduate planners and their employers** in Scotland.





As part of the work on improving internal approaches to training and development within planning authorities, a **training partnership approach** will be piloted during 2008. This will involve multiple authorities formally working together to address their training and development needs.

The **workshops currently available** through the Planning Development Programme include:

- Development economics
- Engagement techniques
- Inquiry training
- Managing change
- Project management
- Retail capacity & impact assessment

A series of design awareness workshops are also available through the Programme. Six workshops are currently available, which can be delivered in-house as a single module or using a pick and mix approach resulting in a series of events. The workshops are:

- Design principles
- Design policies
- Housing
- Residential streets
- Design statements
- Masterplanning

If you would like **further information** about any of these workshops, would like to discuss arranging one for your authority or have an idea for a new workshop, please contact the Programme Manager.

A guide to **Managing Staff Training & Development** targeted at managers of planning services has been published by the Improvement Service. The purpose of the guide is to provide practical advice and information on staff training and development based on current good practice. The guide covers the benefits of staff development & training, identifying development needs, how, why and what people learn and choosing solutions for your service. The guide is available to download from the IS website.

Another key publication from the Planning Development Programme is the **induction pack on planning for elected members** which was published in May 2007. The pack provides a basic introduction to the planning system and to the role and responsibilities of elected members. Its aims to help councillors understand what the planning system seeks to achieve, and introduces the processes involved in decision making. The induction pack is available to download from the IS website.

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A **work shadowing scheme** has been established by the Improvement Service in partnership with Homes for Scotland. The purpose of the scheme is to encourage greater understanding between planning authorities and developers of the aims, priorities and working practices in both organisations. The scheme offers planning authority officers and developers the opportunity to participate in a reciprocal work shadowing arrangement with participants spending time in both organisations. More information about the scheme and the application form are available to download from the IS website.

Information about the Planning Development Programme and forthcoming events is circulated by email to planning authorities. If you would like to be added to our distribution list please email emma.richardson@improvementservice.org.uk.