



West Lothian
Council

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improvement service

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

West Lothian Council





A high performing planning authority needs to have the right number of people to do the work expected of it with the rights skills set. It also needs to have a strategy to ensure that it retains and recruits the right staff in the future. It supports staff to upskill and to be prepared for changes in policy, legislation, and new circumstances.

Attribute	Score <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
1. The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	3
2. The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce	3

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
Access Development Planning team resource in relation to LDP2 production	Kate Hopper	High	Short Term	Existing staff and resources
Investigate the migration of our performance reporting to PowerBI dashboards	Jim McGinley	Medium	Long Term	Existing staff and resources
Develop ArcGIS skills of all staff to maximise use of existing data layers within service and ensure efficiency	Jim McGinley	Medium	Medium Term	Existing staff and resources



Support any staff who wish to develop appropriate skills for the benefit of the service, including attendance at University where appropriate	Wendy McCorriston	Medium	Short to Medium Term	SAAS funding and existing staff resources
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A high performing planning authority has a positive culture through ensuring it has sound governance, effective leadership and a commitment to continuous improvement. The authority has an identified chief planner, who is supported by a strong leadership group to advise on decision-making, policy and operational management.

Attribute	Score <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
3. This Planning Authority has embedded continuous improvement	2
4. This Planning Authority has sound governance	2
5. This Planning Authority has effective leadership	3

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action	Owner	Importance	Timescale	Resources
What action will you take? What will the outcome be?		High Medium Low	Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	
Ensure the ongoing commitment to continuous improvement	Jim McGinley	Medium	Medium Term	Existing staff and resources
Continue with the necessary member training, capturing in particular changes to planning legislation and updates on progress with LDP2	Wendy McCorriston Kate Hopper	High	Short to Medium Term	Existing staff and resources
Conclude the appointment to the Chief Planner Role	Craig McCorriston	High	Short Term	Existing staff





A high performing planning authority needs to have an effective local development plan and other strategies in place to provide a vision for the future of the area. It needs to be able to set and deliver on policy ambitions and priorities by clearly informing decision making and providing certainty and predictability for communities, developers and investment. The authority’s development management systems need to be effective in making the right decisions about development and be as efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

Attribute	Score <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
6. The planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base	3
7. The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	3
8. The planning authority has effective and efficient decision-making processes	3

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
Progress with the production of LDP2	Kate Hopper	High	Medium Term	Existing staff and resources
Explore the use of Uniform for monitoring and discharging planning conditions, generating LRB decisions and developing a TPO template	Claire Johnston	High	Short Term	Existing staff and resources



Undertake reviews of the LRB and DPEA decisions and determine whether there are lessons to be learnt in terms of the determination of applications going forward	Mahlon Fautua	Medium	Short Term	Existing staff and resources
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A high performing planning authority should ensure a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places. Engagement should be fair and inclusive, early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate and should include difficult to reach groups. The authority should engage with a wide range of partners at a national, regional and local level to ensure a joined-up approach and that links are made across policies and programmes. The planning authority should demonstrate good customer care, transparency and effective communication.

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
9. This planning authority has good customer care	3
10. The planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities.	2

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
Expand customer satisfaction survey to a wider range of customers (new home owners and pre-app service users)	Gillian Cyphus	Medium	Short Term	Existing staff and resources
Monitor and review performance of the pre-app service	Gillian Cyphus	Medium	Medium Term	Existing staff and resources



Progress the engagement with developers and communities through the LDP2 process	Kate Hopper	High	Medium Term	Existing staff and resources
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A high performing planning authority should demonstrate place leadership by taking a collaborative place-based approach in line with the Place Principle. It should use the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes in decision-making processes, to achieve the three spatial principles outlined in NPF4: sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and productive places, where we have a greener, fairer, and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The planning authority should seek to ensure that there are no impediments to delivering agreed development.

Attribute	Score <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
11. The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	2
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	2

Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
Continue to work closely with legal officers to progress S75 agreements within the 6-month time frame, including introducing monthly progress meetings	Wendy McCorriston	High	Short Term	Existing staff
Progress the use of the Uniform module to allow for conditions monitoring to support implementation of development in accordance with consents.	Claire Johnston	High	Short Term	Existing staff and resources

