

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

Scottish Borders 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 (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
1. The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	4
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 What action will you take? What will the outcome be?	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	Resources
Attribute 1: Workshop to review service structure, involving key leads across all services; more efficient service delivery	Chief Planning & Housing Officer	Medium	Medium	Lead Officers
Attribute 1: Further work to improve consultee liaison to streamline processes and protocols – to enable improved consultation	Lead Officer (DM)	High	Medium	Lead Officers



Attribute 2: Implementation of succession plan and workforce strategy to ensure continued service and individual development	Chief Planning & Housing Officer HR	Medium	Medium	Lead Officers HR
Attribute 2: Training and development of staff to upskill team members on key topic areas, including those emerging through NPF4, and create opportunities for skill sharing within service; Specialist transferrable skills available within service.	Planning Service	High	Medium	Lead Officers





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 (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
3. This Planning Authority has embedded continuous improvement	3
4. This Planning Authority has sound governance	3
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 What action will you take? What will the outcome be?	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	Resources
Attribute 4: Review and update the Scheme of Delegation for planning applications to create clear and efficient planning application process	Planning Service (DM) Chief Planning & Housing Officer Legal Team	Medium	Medium	Planning Service (DM) Chief Planning & Housing Officer Legal Team



Attributes 3-5: Extend Elected Member training for decision-makers, both as formally required by regulation and informally on current topics and service themes.

Chief Planning &
Housing Officer

Medium

Medium

Chief Planning &
Housing Officer

Planning Service
(DM, Policy, Heritage
and Design)





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 (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
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
Attribute 6: Monitor the implementation of NPF4 policies, identifying areas where further clarification/ interpretation/ guidance/ Chief Planner letter is required from either Scottish Government or by planning authorities	Planning Service (Policy) Scottish Government	High	Short	Lead Officers Scottish Government



Attribute 7: Identify opportunities and new ways of working using GIS, to enable the Planning Service to be more efficient and effective.	Planning Service (Policy)	High	Short	Lead Officers (Policy) GIS Team
Attribute 8: Develop a process to examine LRB and DPEA appeals, to identify any areas where further policy/ guidance is required	Planning Service (Policy, DM, LRB)	High	Short	Lead Officers
Attribute 8: Review of reports of handling and planning conditions to streamline processes and reduce length of reports and number of conditions	Planning Service (DM)	High	Short/ Medium	DM/ Enforcement Team
Attribute 8: Update DM Charter	Planning Service (DM)	High	Short	Lead Officer (DM)



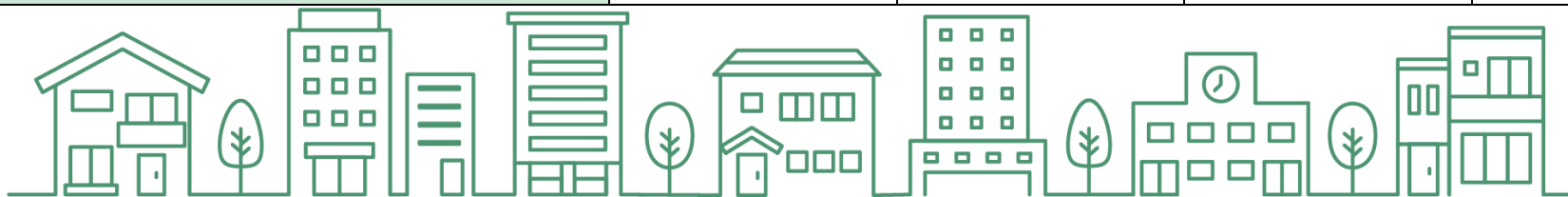


A high performing planning authority should ensure a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places. Engagement should be fair and inclusive, early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate and should include difficult to reach groups. The authority should engage with a wide range 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.	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
Attribute 9: Review and update planning pages of website to encourage more customer self-service and promotion of national planning portal, particularly in relation to householder developments. To make the required information more accessible and easier for customers to navigate.	Planning Service (DM)	High	Short	Lead Officer (DM) Communications (Website)



Attribute 9: Consider tools to improve performance in the pre-application advice service.	Planning Service (DM)	Medium	Medium	Lead Officer (DM) Communications (Website)
Attribute 10: Build upon existing tools and develop new ways to undertake customer and community engagement, ensuring that it is collaborative, meaningful and proportionate, utilising digital technology where possible	Planning Service (Policy)	Medium	Medium	Lead Officers (DM & Policy)





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 (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
11. The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	3
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	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 What action will you take? What will the outcome be?	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	Resources
Attribute 11: Regularly review new development schemes built on the ground and embed learning and training opportunities	Planning Services	High	Short-Medium	Development Management, Policy, Heritage & Design and Roads Planning Teams; Elected Members



Attribute 12: Review the Section 75 process and procedure with aim of streamlined more efficient and clear process for all.

Planning Service
(DM)
Legal Team

Medium

Medium

Lead Officer (DM)
Legal Team

