



# **EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICES**

## **NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

**Performance Assessment**

**Cohort 3**

**April 2025**

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## Introduction

East Renfrewshire Planning Services is part of the Council's Environment Directorate and sits within the Place Team.

East Renfrewshire Planning Services delivers predominantly statutory functions, with limited discretionary work and facilitates place change through sustainable development, taking account of the climate emergency, growing our economy, and strengthening Community Wealth Building.

Over recent years statutory planning work has become more complex and challenging requiring training and development of staff and elected members. A multi-disciplinary workforce provides skills and experience to deliver these functions, as well as innovating and continually improving. For more than a decade, the Planning Authority has published an annual Planning Performance Framework, submitted to Scottish Ministers with feedback provided and 'marked' in terms of green/amber/red. Over that decade East Renfrewshire Planning Authority has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement.

Planning Performance Frameworks are now being replaced by a National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF). This is our first report for 2023/24 and is part of a national pilot along with thirty three other Planning Authorities across Scotland.

East Renfrewshire is paired with Dumfries and Galloway Council through this pilot, which has provided an opportunity to support and learn across Councils.

This report has been prepared through a self-assessment by the Planning Authority and reviewed through a Peer Review workshop. Externally facilitated by Kevin Murray Associates, the peer group considered the Authority's self-assessment, and focused on areas for improvement. The group was selected by identifying both external and internal key customers of East Renfrewshire's Planning Services.

This process has assisted East Renfrewshire in assessing performance, reflecting, listening and considering improvements for further change. An important aspect of the assessment has been through the Peer Review group, who provided their time with an open and honest approach to the review. We would like to thank those individuals for their valuable contribution.

**Michaela Sullivan**  
**Head of Place**  
**East Renfrewshire Council**

**Michelle McGuckin**  
**Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager**

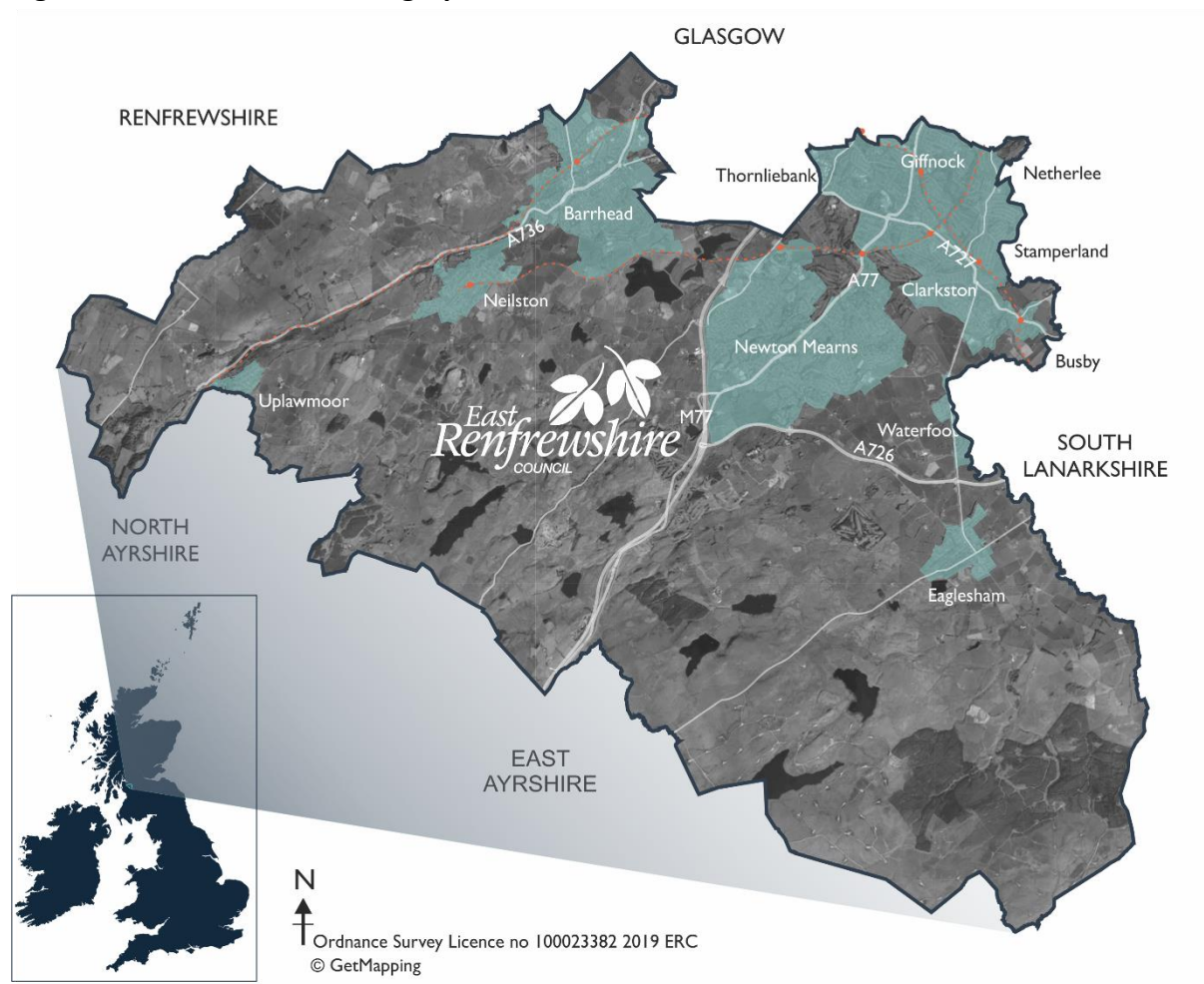
## East Renfrewshire Council

East Renfrewshire forms part of the wider Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Region. This is Scotland's largest city region and covers an area which contains a third of Scotland's total population and which generates a third of Scotland's economic output.

East Renfrewshire covers an area of approximately 67 square miles (174 km<sup>2</sup>) and exhibits a diverse range of environments. As shown in figure 1, the north of the area comprises the urban areas of Giffnock, Newton Mearns, Clarkston, Busby, Thornliebank and Barrhead. These areas have a distinctive and largely suburban character which forms part of the southern conurbation of Glasgow.

There is also an extensive rural hinterland to the south which provides an attractive setting for the urban areas and within which the villages of Uplawmoor, Neilston, Waterfoot and Eaglesham are located.

**Figure 1: Boundaries and Geographical Extent of East Renfrewshire**



The proximity of East Renfrewshire to Glasgow, coupled with its attractive setting, mean that the area is viewed as a highly desirable place to live, work and visit. East Renfrewshire is an area

of rich environmental quality in terms of both the built and natural environment with a network of important local urban greenspaces that contributes positively to local amenity and provides leisure and recreation opportunities. Demand and need for housing is high and there is significant pressure for new housing including private, affordable and homes for older people.

East Renfrewshire is well placed in respect of the national transport network with the M77 motorway and the Glasgow South Orbital (GSO) passing through the area and with good accessibility to Glasgow and beyond by public transport routes. However, there remain limitations with public transport routes in certain parts of the Council area. Being within easy commuting distance of Glasgow and other areas also provides local communities with a wide choice of job opportunities but equally encourages out-commuting which places increasing demands on public transport and the road network.

East Renfrewshire residents enjoy a good quality of life and as such, health in the area is relatively good. The 2022 Citizens Panel reveals that there is strong satisfaction within East Renfrewshire as a place to live (85%). East Renfrewshire's good reputation, good educational opportunities and safety were the most common reasons for living in the area.

### **East Renfrewshire Community Plan**

The Community Plan is the overarching plan for East Renfrewshire and sets out the high-level ambitions for all age groups and communities in East Renfrewshire for the next 10 years. The Council has commenced a review of the Community Plan with a refreshed document programmed for 2024.

The Community Plan's vision is:

“East Renfrewshire is an attractive and thriving place to grow up, work, visit, raise a family and enjoy later life”.

The Community Plan is structured around 5 strategic priority areas:

- All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure childhood and succeed;
- East Renfrewshire residents are healthy and active and have the skills for learning, life and work;
- East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses;
- East Renfrewshire residents are safe and live in supportive communities; and
- Older people and people with long-term conditions in East Renfrewshire are valued; their voices are heard; and they enjoy full and positive lives.

The Community Empowerment Act (2015) introduced the requirement for Councils to prepare:

- A Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) known as the 'Fairer East Ren' Plan; and
- Locality Plans.

The Fairer East Ren Plan is the part of the Community Plan that focuses on actions to reduce inequality in the area, supported in turn by more detailed Locality Plans focused upon local communities.

The Planning Service continues to work closely with the Community Planning Team to integrate spatial and land use planning with community planning, to deliver against the Council's overall vision.

### Context

|                            |                                                  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning Authority:</b> | <b>East Renfrewshire Council</b>                 |
| <b>Lead officer:</b>       | <b>Michelle McGuckin</b>                         |
| <b>Email:</b>              | <b>michelle.mcguckin@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk</b> |
| <b>Phone number:</b>       | <b>07341640706</b>                               |

The Planning (Scotland) Action 2019 introduced new statutory reporting for planning authorities. This mandatory requirement means that we must prepare a report annually that will assess our performance and identify actions for improvement.

East Renfrewshire Council is part of Cohort 3 for the pilot led by the Improvement Service to create a National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF). The Planning Service has undertaken a performance assessment and has identified areas for improvement focused on the attributes of a high performing planning authority. Within five themes there are 12 attributes.

| THEME          | COMPONENTS                                                                                                             |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>People</b>  | has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity<br>has a valued and supported workforce                   |
| <b>Culture</b> | has embedded continuous improvement<br>has sound governance<br>has effective leadership                                |
| <b>Tools</b>   | has robust policy and evidence base<br>makes best use of digital technology<br>has effective decision-making processes |
| <b>Engage</b>  | has good customer care<br>has effective engagement & collaboration with stakeholders and communities                   |
| <b>Place</b>   | supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places<br>supports the delivery of consented development |

## Scoring Matrix

The Planning Service has used the below matrix when determining what score we have given each attribute.

| <br><b>PRIORITISE</b> | <br><b>REVIEW</b> | <br><b>DEVELOP</b> | <br><b>BUILD UPON</b> | <br><b>CONSOLIDATE</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No progress                                                                                            | Making limited progress                                                                            | Making fair progress                                                                                | Making good progress                                                                                    | Making excellent progress                                                                                 |
| 5                                                                                                      | 4                                                                                                  | 3                                                                                                   | 2                                                                                                       | 1                                                                                                         |
| Prioritise fundamental review and revisit approach taken.<br>Engage with NPI<br>Learn from others      | Review ambition<br>Review approach taken<br>Inform NPI<br>Learn from others                        | Increase ambition in targets<br>Review and improve implementation                                   | Increase ambition in targets<br>Share learning with others                                              | Share learning with others                                                                                |

## East Renfrewshire Planning Services Peer Review Meeting

A peer review workshop was held on 16 April 2024 involving twenty five attendees representing external and internal key customers of Planning Services:

- Scottish Water
- Barrhead Housing Association
- Taylor Wimpey
- AS Homes / Briar Homes
- MacTaggart and Mickel
- ERC Culture and Leisure Trust
- ERC Legal
- ERC Housing
- ERC Environmental Health
- Dumfries and Galloway Council as the Service's peer partner authority.

Also in attendance were three members of East Renfrewshire Planning Services who were present in an observation capacity but were on hand to answer specific questions. The National Improvement Champion was also in attendance. The workshop was facilitated by three representatives from Kevin Murray Associates who guided the group through the improvement attributes and actions as well as ensuring everyone had an open and honest discussion about actions and any issues.



The purpose of the peer review was to look at the report and to review the scoring of attributes and identified improvement actions. The draft of the Improvement Framework presented to



the peer review participants prior to the meeting identified 28 proposed actions and improvements across the Themes set out in the guidance document.

Following introductions and an outline of proceeding, the National Improvement Champion provided a summary of the NPIF process.

Attendees were asked to note two key topics or ideas on post-its, to ensure that all are covered including:

- Financial resources and staffing
- Commercial awareness/viability of development
- Environment Health issues - lack of planning controls; enforcement of planning conditions; noise conditions
- Continue building on shared evidence base
- Placemaking generally and the introduction of design panel
- How to better design/develop/realise/sustain communities with the right balance of amenities or infrastructure
- Continue to be open to meeting/collaborating with stakeholders - LDP and Development Management
- Improve pre-app process with the re-introduction of comprehensive pre-application advice service
- Conditions; use of digital and IT, resources; skills needs for future.

The Chief Planner described the local context, giving an overview of population and demographics; local economic output and employment noting that homes and education were strong, but local employment was weak in relation to skills and wages; education; built environment homes with challenges around ageing stock; natural environment and transport links.

Given the range and breadth of the markers and Attributes covered by the Improvement Framework the facilitator agreed in collaboration with the attendant stakeholders that three pre-determined groups would consider three attributes and their associated actions to ensure the time was used most effectively.

The group agreed the Planning Service's actions with some minor amendments as well as identifying additional improvement actions for consideration by the Planning Service. The groups worked well together and provided valuable information to use, an example of this is when they asked the Planning Service to prioritise staff training on engaging with customers.

The comments made by the peer review group have been incorporated into the final version of this report and the improvements related to particular Attributes shaped to reflect the outcome of the discussions and feedback received from the peer review group.



A high performing planning authority needs to have the right number of people to do the work expected of it with the right 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.

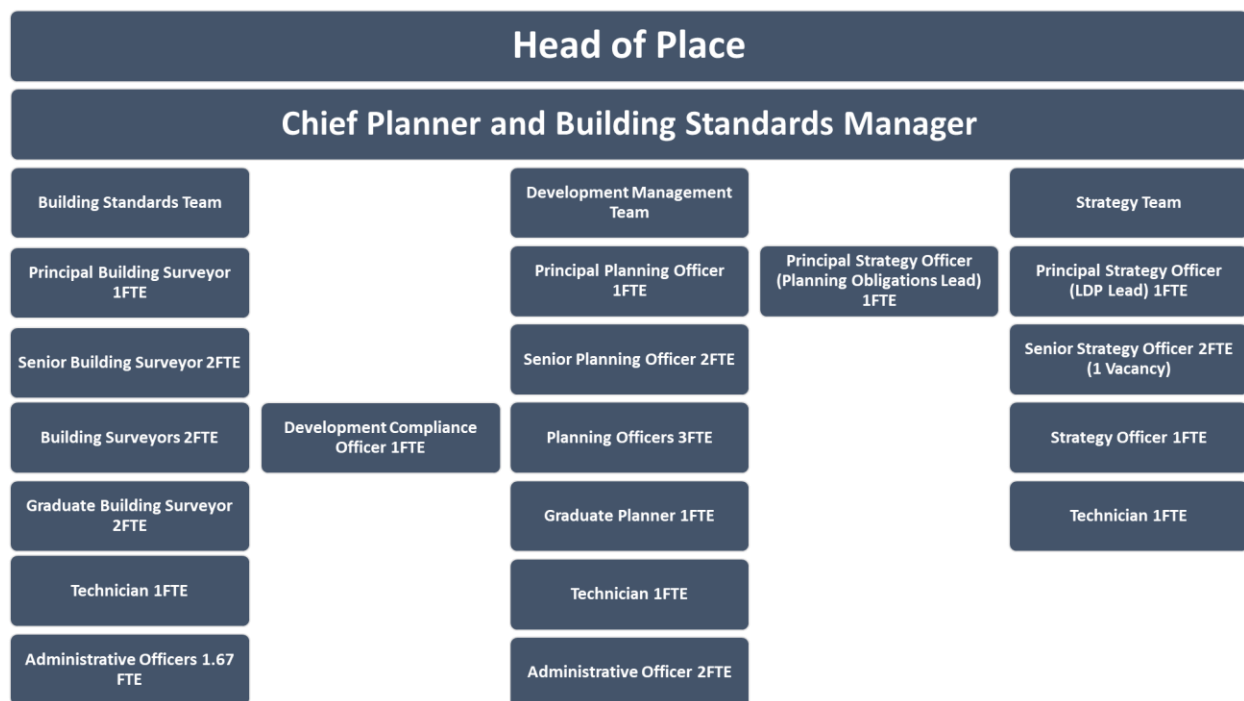
**Attribute 1: this planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity**

Does the planning authority have the sufficient level of staff to carry out all activities within the required timeframes?

East Renfrewshire Council's Planning and Building Services sit within the Environment Directorate and report to the Head of Place. The Service comprises 26 FTE multi-disciplinary staff (as shown below), 16 of whom are employed as Planners (11 are Chartered Town Planners and 3 are Licentiate, 1 holds a planning degree with relevant professional planning experience, although not an RTPI member).

There is an ageing workforce within the Planning and Building Standards Service with 20 of 26 officers between the ages of 45 and 64 (April 2024). This is a matter, which requires consideration.

Since 2020, there has been a significant turnover in staff within the Service and this has affected delivery and performance. Whilst the situation had stabilised, there were five vacancies across the Planning and Building Standards Service in 2023-24 and action has been taken to fill some of these posts. To address a biodiversity gap within the Department, the decision was taken to introduce a specialist post. This replaces a Senior Strategy Officer post which could not be filled due to lack of suitable candidates.



Our People Strategy 2024-27 recognises the council's employees as its greatest assets and sets out the strategy to invest in its staff to better ensure succession planning opportunities and diversity.

The Chief Planner and Building Service Manager reports to Head of Place (a Fellow of the RTPI) and is supported by four Principal Officers, three of which lead a team in:

- Planning Strategy;
- Development Management; and
- Building Standards.

The teams are supported by a Principal Strategy Officer (Planning Obligations Lead).

The Strategy Team encounters challenges due to its small scale. Besides preparing the Local Development Plan (LDP) and other supporting guidance, the team is also responsible for greenspace and biodiversity policy. However, the limited resources can restrict the development of specialisms and expertise in other areas. The team is at the early stages of preparing the new Local Development Plan (LDP3) and is currently adhering to the timescales outlined in the published Development Plan Scheme. However, we recognise that as the LDP3 process progresses, and with the additional requirements introduced by the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act, there is the potential risk of delays to the LDP3 timetable in the future.

The Service operates a hybrid work style and a more flexible way of working, whilst continuing to strive for good quality customer service and improved performance. The Service is part of a

wider Council family culture; ambition, kindness and trust, supporting each other both in terms of our wellbeing and work, and aligning its values to 'The Way We Work'.

In 2024/25, we will carefully monitor how the requirements introduced by the Planning Act affect the Planning Service and the LDP3 timetable.

We consider that the Planning Service is making reasonable progress with regard to the resources and skills necessary to maximise productivity.

Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current budget?

Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current income?

East Renfrewshire Council's Planning and Building Standards Service is revenue funded and income is generated through statutory application fees and discretionary charging. The income does not cover the cost of the Service. The 2019 Planning Act and NPF4 places additional requirements on Planning Authorities, and complexity especially in the assessment and determination of planning applications and the review of Local Development Plans. This requires additional resources and the upskilling of planning staff and elected members.

Does the planning authority received responses from consultees within the prescribed timescale when assessing planning applications?

Key Agencies and Infrastructure Providers have been actively engaged in preparing the draft LDP3 Evidence Report Topic Papers. Organisations were contacted to provide data and evidence for the Topic Papers, and they all responded within the required timescales. Additionally, these organisations provided feedback on early drafts of the Topic Papers, which the Council has incorporated into the draft versions set to be published for wider engagement in April 2024.

By far most consultation responses on development applications are received within the 21-day period. There are occasions where some consultation responses take longer. This may be a result of the complexity of any issues raised, whether further information is required from applicants, or resource pressures affecting the consultee themselves. Rarely will a late consultation reply be the sole reason for a delay in the determination of an application.

An overview of the consultation responses received within the 21-day period during the period 2023/24 is set out in the table below:

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| <b>Internal Consultee</b> | 74% |
| <b>External Consultee</b> | 87% |
| <b>No response</b>        | 25% |

### Does the planning authority have the ability to access the appropriate advice, expertise, evidence and data it requires?

With the increasing complexity of work involved in addressing the policy context of NPF4, in determining planning applications or preparing LDP3, there is a greater input of specialist advice required and input from both internal and external consultees.

The Planning Service has a strong working relationships with other Council Services, including housing, education, roads and transportation, environmental health, economic development and regeneration, Health and Social Care Partnership, and Community Planning, which ensures good access to the evidence and data essential for preparing the LDP and responding to planning applications.

The Environmental Health Service provides specialist advice on contaminated land and on most noise issues. Where the Council does not have the ability to provide in-house advice, the planning authority has engaged external consultants to provide the required advice. Recent examples of this include consultation advice on windfarm noise output and flooding.

Additionally, strong connections with the Glasgow City Region (GCR) provide access to and enable participation in regional partnership initiatives, including strategic research on housing land availability, the regional economy, and greenspace and nature networks. These efforts involve Glasgow & Clyde Valley regional planning colleagues, the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, and the GCR Intelligence Hub.

Participation in regional and local working groups and networks, such as Climate Ready Clyde, and the City Region Heads of Planning group, is particularly important for sharing expertise and accessing evidence and data to support policy-making.

A cross-party Member Officer Working Group has been set up to allow for discussion with Members on the preparation of LDP3. Meetings have been organised for May, June and September 2024 to discuss the LDP3 Evidence Report and potential engagement activities.

## Attribute 2: the planning authority has a valued and supported workforce

### Does the planning authority have a workforce planning strategy in place?

Valuing and supporting the Planning Service's workforce is a key principle and core value of how the service works and East Renfrewshire Council is developing its workplace strategy through continuous review. It reviews how and what services it delivers for our customers. The most up to date is reported in our annual Service Improvement Plan.

The Planning and Building Standards Service has created opportunities for a younger workforce, achieved through the appointment of two Graduate Planning Officers and two Graduate

Building Standards Officers. However, attracting and retaining talented planners, building standards officers and other built environment professionals into local government is increasingly challenging.

[Does the planning authority have the ability to support staff development and upskilling and send staff on relevant courses?](#)

The Planning Service organises and delivers a wide range of continuous professional development sessions which have been gaining momentum in recent years. To maximise our relatively small training budget, line managers encourage staff to attend relevant courses, with a focus upon online courses and webinars. Training opportunities are discussed and recorded annually for everyone as part of ERC's continuous individual personal development planning. Regular one-to-one and team meetings also take place to encourage open communication. When members of the Planning and Building Standards Service attend training events, they are encouraged to share their learning by hosting a lunchtime learning session to which all staff in the wider Place team are invited.

More detailed consideration of specific actions on further training elements particularly on communication skills are addressed under the 'Engage' theme Attribute 9 and 10.

The workforce planning and personal development strategy has resulted in a more diverse workforce. However, the Service needs to achieve high rates of retention and continue training and development for all. In future years, the Service wants to provide further leadership and management training across the Service management team, whilst maintaining regular training opportunities for all.

[Does the planning authority have a deliverable commitment to support staff health and wellbeing?](#)

East Renfrewshire Council seeks to ensure health and wellbeing is embedded with 'The Way We Work'. It recognises the benefits and impact that good health and wellbeing has on employees. ERC offers a wide range of resources and policies to support employees:

- from work-life balance to childcare, from eye tests to well-being checklist and occupational health support;
- to employee-run health classes such as walking and pilates;
- support for a wide variety of health conditions in the workplace including cancer, miscarriage, menopause, grief, stress and the right to disconnect;
- financial advice, consumers rights;
- free mental health support and confidential counselling and support for all East Renfrewshire employees; and
- Various initiatives to encourage health and wellbeing, including discounts for staff using various active travel facilities, and the recent purchase of electric bikes that can be hired for free by staff.

## Improvement Action Plan (People theme)

In relation to the People theme the proposed scoring for Attributes 1 and 2 are:

| Attribute                                                                              | Score<br>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 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, the proposed areas of required improvement are listed below noting who is responsible for delivering the action and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

| Improvement Action<br><br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Owner                                        | Importance<br><br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | Timescale<br><br>Short term – 1 year<br>Medium term – 3 years<br>Long term – 3+ years | Resources                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 1 – encourage new systems and processes to reduce recruitment difficulties in development management and strategy teams. This includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contributing to work force planning efforts across the Council e.g. Service Improvement Planning, participating in career fairs in schools</li> <li>working with Heads of Planning and the Scottish Government to attract more planners</li> </ul> | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager | High                                    | Short-medium                                                                          | Chief Planner<br>Planning Service<br>Improvement Plan<br>Time |
| Attribute 1 – create a project board for LDP3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)        | High                                    | Short                                                                                 | Strategy Team                                                 |

|                                                                                                                 |                                                               |        |                |                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 1 – Create Uniform dashboards to monitor DM performance and workloads                                 | Principal Planner (DM)                                        | Medium | Short          | Principal Planner (DM), Senior Planner, Systems Developer                                                   |
| Attribute 1 – Undertake a review of current pre-application service                                             | Principal Planner (DM)                                        | Medium | Short          | Principal Planner (DM), Senior Planner                                                                      |
| Attribute 1 – improve planning officers' commercial awareness and understanding of development viability        | Chief Planner                                                 | High   | Short - Medium | Head of Place, Chief Planner, industry engagement                                                           |
| Attribute 2 – Seek innovative ways in which to increase staff access to relevant training and knowledge sharing | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                  | Medium | Short-medium   | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |
| Attribute 2: Undertake internal CPD events and opportunities for staff to meet as a wider team                  | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) | Medium | Medium         | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               |





**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 3: this planning authority has embedded continuous improvement

**Has the planning authority undertaken an annual assessment of its performance and acted upon areas previously identified as in need of improvement?**

The Planning Authority provides annual returns to the Scottish Government in respect of its performance over the period. This includes reporting on the authority's statutory performance targets.

The Planning and Building Services also reports annually on corporate performance and reviews current practices. Additionally, the planning team contributes to regional annual monitoring feeding into Clydeplan reporting on land supplies, completions etc.

Previous Scottish Ministers' comments on the Council's Planning Performance Framework highlighted the need for:

- i) an Ongoing reduction of average timescales for determining applications across all development categories; and
- ii) Publication or updating of an enforcement charter.

Both of these requirements have now been actioned.

**Has the planning authority achieved recognition at relevant awards or through performance accreditation frameworks?**

Several key Council proposals have received RTPI planning awards or commendations in recent years, such as the Maidenhill masterplan. However, due to the pressures on the service during 2023/24, there has not been sufficient capacity to enter submissions into relevant external awards. We remain committed to delivering high quality work and continuously improving our performance and development quality and we will continue to explore future opportunities to further validate and showcase our achievements.

### Has the planning authority engaged in peer review, good practice exchange or improvement activities?

Throughout the year the Planning Service has continued to participate in knowledge sharing both internally across the Council and externally with key partners, particularly at a regional level via Clydeplan and Glasgow City Region.

The Planning Service regularly engages with other authorities through Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) where East Renfrewshire are represented on the Executive Committee (by the Planning & Building Standards Manager) and on various subgroups. Representatives regularly attend HOPS to keep aware of good practice. Officers use the HOPS Knowledge Hub to reach out to other authorities for advice or ideas on policy development and implementation and processes.

The Planning Performance Framework process in previous years has allowed for peer review with another planning authority. This has continued with the NPIF and our partner Dumfries and Galloway Council.

We continue to learn from others and share our best practice to deliver continued change and improvement.

### Has the planning authority addressed any complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and has evidence of this and that it has learned from valid cases?

The Council operates a two stage complaints procedure. After exhausting the Council's complaints procedure, the complainant has recourse to the SPSO. There was one complaint relating to Development Management to the SPSO during the 2023/24 reporting period, however this complaint was not upheld. The Strategy team did not receive complaints to SPSO during the period.

## Attribute 4: the planning authority has sound governance

### Does the planning authority have an effective scheme of delegation in place?

The Planning Authority had an approved Planning Scheme of Delegation in place during the 2023-24 reporting period. This provides advice to officers and members about which applications can be determined under delegated powers and under which circumstances decisions must be taken by the Planning Applications Committee. The Scheme was approved by the full Council on 25th February 2021 and by the Scottish Ministers on 15th March 2021.

Have all councillors who exercise a planning function undergone statutory training and is there is evidence of ongoing training for members?

Mandatory training for Elected Members was included in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 as part of a wider package of measures to improve the performance of the planning system as a whole. Statutory training is also provided to all members of the Planning Applications Committee and Local Review Body before they can actively participate in those committees. In addition, we hold briefings with Elected Members in advance of Planning Committee and a further training session was held with all members with regards to the new planning system and NPF4 on 19th May 2023. Future training will be planned for Elected Members to allow us to meet our new statutory duties.

Have more than x% of officer recommendations been overturned by councillors at committee or Local Review Body?

The Planning Applications Committee is the decision-making body that determines planning applications where authority is not delegated to officers. This includes major planning applications, applications with 10 or more objections and applications where elected members or staff have an interest. The Local Review Body considers applications for review of delegated decisions.

The Planning Applications Committee can request to visit a site and site visits are carried out for each Local Review Body Case. In the 2023/24 reporting period, the Planning Applications Committee undertook two site visits.

Five planning applications were determined by the Planning Applications Committee during the 2023/24 reporting period. Of those, one recommendation of “approve subject to conditions” was overturned to “refuse”.

## Attribute 5: the planning authority has effective leadership

Does the planning authority have an identified Chief Planning Officer in place? Yes

Does the Chief Planning Officer advise on corporate decision making and policy within the broader organisation? The Chief Planning Officer is a Member of the Environment Department extended leadership team and can influence decision making and policy within the wider Environment department.

Is the planning authority's Chief Planning Officer a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute? Yes

Does the Chief Planning Officer advise and support external bodies through engagement in organisations' committees, advisory groups or working groups? Yes

### Does the planning authority have a strong leadership team that supports a culture of continuous improvement?

In 2023-24, East Renfrewshire Council had in post a Chief Planning Officer in accordance with the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The Chief Planning Officer role is:

- integral to the leadership, vision and strategic direction of the planning authority;
- the local authority's placemaking champion undertaking a strategic role and raising the profile of planning in authority decisions;
- a professional adviser to the local authority as a whole on the spatial and place-based implications of decisions and investments in the short, medium, and longer term. This entails providing relevant professional planning advice and support to the authority's senior management team and elected members and assisting in developing corporate objectives and translating these into place-based strategies;
- to deliver current national priorities, policies or strategies, ensuring alignment with national-level planning principles and contribute to the development and maintenance of plans and strategies ensuring the delivery of an inclusive and accessible planning system; and
- To lead on ensuring that the planning authority embeds continuous improvement and engage with the National Planning Improvement Champion to agree any areas of improvement.

The Chief Planning Officer is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute and advises and supports external bodies through engagement in committees, advisory groups and working groups e.g. Heads of Planning, Glasgow Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee and the Glasgow City Region.

The Chief Planning Officer is a member of the Environment Department extended leadership team and can influence decision making and policy within the wider Environment department.

### Improvement Action Plan (Culture theme)

In relation to the Culture theme the proposed scoring for Attributes 3, 4 and 5 are:

| Attribute                                                      | Score<br>(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, the proposed areas of required improvement are listed below noting who is responsible for delivering the action and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

| Improvement Action<br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                                                                                                                                            | Owner                                                                                                       | Importance<br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | Timescale<br>Short term – 1 year<br>Medium term – 3 years<br>Long term – 3+ years | Resources                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 3: Adopt a 'Place Principle' approach to inform the preparation of an Environment Department-wide strategy and ensure place principles are part of the thinking in the Environment and any revisions to Vision for the Future. | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                                                                | Medium                              | Medium- /Long                                                                     | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                         |
| Attribute 3: Create, review and update customer guidance on the website.                                                                                                                                                                 | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               | High                                | Short Term                                                                        | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                         |
| Attribute 3: Create Uniform dashboards to monitor Development Management performance and workloads                                                                                                                                       | Principal Planner (DM)                                                                                      | Medium                              | Short                                                                             | Principal Planner (DM), Senior Planner, Systems Developer                                                   |
| Attribute 3: Review the working relationship between Development Management and Strategy teams to assist in the preparation of LDP3                                                                                                      | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               | Medium                              | Medium                                                                            | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               |
| Attribute 3: Review the working relationship between the Planning Service and key customers and establish regular meetings with key customers including community councils, environmental health and roads, SEPA, developers             | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) | High                                | Short-Medium                                                                      | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |

| Improvement Action<br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                                                                               | Owner                                                             | Importance<br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | Timescale<br>Short term – 1<br>year<br>Medium term – 3<br>years<br>Long term – 3+<br>years | Resources                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 3: Continue to record planning complaints / comments which is accessible to all the service                                                                       | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager / Customer Relations | High                                | Short                                                                                      | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |
| Attribute 3: Submit for planning awards where appropriate.                                                                                                                  | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                      | Low                                 | Long                                                                                       | Planning & Building Standards Team                                                                          |
| Attribute 4: Implement Elected Member training in accordance with legislation.                                                                                              | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                      | Medium                              | Medium-Long                                                                                | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |
| Attribute 5: Continue to investigate opportunities to enhance service delivery through sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with our internal and external partners. | Head of Place, Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager       | Medium                              | Medium term                                                                                | Head of Place, Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                                                 |



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 efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

## Attribute 6: the planning authority has a robust policy and evidence

Does the planning authority have an up to date Local Development Plan in place and/ or is on track to adoption?

The Council has an up-to-date Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP sets out a long-term strategy to guide development to the right places. The LDP outlines plans for growth and new development in East Renfrewshire over the next 10 years and beyond. LDP2 was adopted in March 2022 and is used (alongside National Planning Framework 4) by the Development Management Team to determine planning applications.

The Scottish Government published Local Development Planning Regulations and Guidance in May 2023. The Scottish Government expects that every planning authority in Scotland will have a new style LDP in place by May 2028.

Details on the stages and programming for preparing the new Local Development Plan is set out in the 2024 [Development Plan Scheme \(DPS\)](#) and [Participation Statement](#). The Development Plan Scheme (DPS) indicates that LDP3 will be adopted in October 2027. Currently, work is progressing in line with the timescales set out in the DPS and a new LDP will be in place in line with the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The service is making fair progress and can demonstrate a robust policy and evidence base.

Does the planning authority have an up to date Regional Spatial Strategy in place/ or on track to adoption?

Reforms to the planning system also include the introduction of a new duty for the Council to jointly participate with the Glasgow City Region (GCR) member Local Authorities, which comprises the eight local authorities of East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City,

Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

Regional Spatial Strategies will provide clear place-based spatial strategy and spatial priorities that will guide future development and infrastructure delivery across the region. RSS's are not part of the statutory development plan but have an important role to play in informing future versions of the NPF and LDPs.

Work to prepare the GCR Regional Spatial Strategy is currently underway. On the 28th of June 2023, the Clydeplan Joint Committee agreed a recommendation to transfer the responsibility for oversight of the development of a Regional Spatial Strategy to the GCR Cabinet. There is an indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in place. Once regulations are enacted and guidance published by the Scottish Government for the preparation of RSS's, the GCR Local Authorities will start the process of transitioning the indicative RSS into a formal RSS.

The benefits of continuing to work in partnership and the opportunity for shared resources to assist with a coordinated and comprehensive approach to LDP and future RSS preparation for the Glasgow City Region, are recognised.

[Has the planning authority's Local Development Plan Evidence Report been approved by the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals and/ or on track for approval?](#)

During the reporting period, work on the LDP3 Evidence Report was carried out in accordance with the timescales set out in the 2024 DPS. Early evidence gathering engagement took place between March 2023 and March 2024, with additional engagement ongoing. Further details are provided under Attribute 10.

The Evidence Report is programmed to be reported to the Council for approval in September 2024, followed by submission to Scottish Ministers for Gate Check.

Details on the stages and programming for preparing the new Local Development Plan is set out in the 2024 [Development Plan Scheme \(DPS\) and Participation Statement](#).

[Have the application of the Local Development Plan's policies been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review?](#)

As part of the preparation of the LDP3 Evidence Report, the planning authority was required to evaluate whether the previous adopted plan (LDP2 March 2022) has delivered on its outcomes, and allocations, identify any lessons learnt for the preparation of the new plan and consider the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

The draft Evidence Report highlights some of the most important factors that have been identified through monitoring the performance of the current LDP2 and what will be required to be considered in developing the new LDP3. Consideration is given to the performance of the overall strategy within the current economic, social and environmental context. An analysis of the policies of LDP2 against the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) will also be included.



East Renfrewshire has experienced significant development and physical change over recent years. Overall, the majority of development has taken place in accordance with the Plan's strategy. Whilst there has been considerable pressure for development in the Green Belt the current strategy of LDP2 has been effective in resisting such proposals. No major development sites that constitute departures from the Development Plan have been approved by the Council or on appeal out-with the urban areas.

Ten appeals were determined by the DPEA during the 2023/24 reporting period comprising of a mixture of application types. Of the appeals determined, 60% of the original decisions made by the planning authority were upheld.

## Attribute 7: the planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology

[Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?](#)

The Planning and Building Standards pages of the Council's web-site provides a direct link to the ePlanning.scot website to encourage electronic submissions. In the 2023/24 reporting period, 97% of all applications were submitted electronically.

[Does the planning authority have a data governance strategy in place for the management of planning data?](#)

The Planning Service had a data governance strategy in place during the 2023/24 reporting period.

[Does the planning authority have the ability to use interactive web-mapping, GIS and spatial data?](#)

The Strategy Team gathered a large evidence base for the LDP3 evidence report from a wide range of Council Services, Key Agencies, infrastructure and utility providers, the development industry and other stakeholders utilising the latest data available at the time of preparing the draft Evidence Report.

The Planning Service has access to two digital mapping systems, ESRI GIS Portal, and Idox ESRI mapping. This mapping software is available to all planning staff to view and create spatial data for planning applications, view historical applications, and carry out a full constraint check on planning applications, as well as the current LDP planning policies.

Over the past year 1-1 training and external training courses on ESRI have been provided for some staff. This has enabled staff to begin to take fuller advantage of the capabilities of the GIS system including spatial analysis of data and preparation of storymaps.

Storymaps have been used extensively in the last few years to share planning information in an easily accessible format. LDP2 was produced as a storymap as have the annual updates to the Development Plan Scheme. The Storymap format is being used as the basis for presenting information for the LDP 3 Evidence Report and will be developed and expanded as a key method of engagement to present spatial data and policy information for the Proposed LDP 3.

Officers have access to tablets that allow data to be captured onsite, for example to support the preparation of our open space and site analysis, which can then be uploaded directly into the GIS system.

We are making reasonable progress in utilising data and digital technology, with a high rate of applications submitted via the eDevelopment Portal. However, we recognise the need for improvements in how data, information, and intelligence is used. It is important to further upskill officers with GIS analysis, spatial data and data management.

[Does the planning authority have the ability to use digital approaches to engagement, including website, social media and other platforms?](#)

The Council's Corporate Communications Team works with officers to promote engagement opportunities on its' social media channels and through the Council's website.

Where appropriate, the Council uses online questionnaires created in the Council's engagement hub software, or through the use of GOSS forms to seek opinions from stakeholders on the preparation of the LDP and other associated policies and guidance.

## Attribute 8: the planning authority has effective and efficient decision making processes

[Does the planning authority have the ability to make decisions within the required timeframes?](#)

During the 2023/24 reporting period, the planning authority underwent a number of staffing changes. Where the vacant posts remained within the structure, the Council moved to fill the vacancies as quickly as possible, which ensured the performance remained relatively stable.

[Are less than x% of planning decisions overturned at appeal/judicial review?](#)

No planning decisions were overturned at judicial review during the 2023/24 reporting period.

During the period 2023/24 reporting period, 13 decisions were reviewed by the Local Review Body, of which 53.8% of the original decisions were upheld. During the same period, 10 appeals were considered by the DPEA, of which 60% of the original decisions were upheld.

[Does the planning authority have an up-to-date Enforcement Charter?](#)

The Council's Planning Enforcement Charter requires to be reviewed every 2 years and was last reviewed in March 2023. It was therefore up-to-date during the 2023/24 reporting period.

### Does the planning authority have the ability to resolve enforcement cases?

The Planning and Building Standards Service has a Development Compliance Officer. This is a shared post between planning (development management) and building standards and is split on a 50/50 basis. The Council encourages planning enforcement complaints to be submitted via an online form on the Council's web site. All complaints are investigated. In some cases, it will be determined that no breach of planning control has occurred, and no further action will be taken. In other cases, a breach may have occurred, however it may not be in the public interest to take any action other than advising the landowner/developer of the position. The Enforcement Charter outlines what issues will be prioritised.

## Improvement Action Plan (Tools theme)

In relation to the Tools theme the proposed scoring for Attributes 6, 7 and 8 are:

| Attribute                                                                       | Score<br>(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, the proposed areas of required improvement are listed below noting who is responsible for delivering the action and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

| Improvement Action<br><br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                     | Owner                                 | Importance<br><br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | Timescale<br><br>Short term – 1 year<br>Medium term – 3 years<br>Long term – 3+ years | Resources     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Attribute 6: Continue work on the Proposed LDP3 in accordance with emerging legislation and guidance. | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) | Medium                                  | Long term                                                                             | Strategy Team |
| Attribute 6: Submit LDP3 Evidence Report for approval at                                              | Principal Strategy                    | High                                    | Short                                                                                 | Strategy Team |

| <b>Improvement Action</b><br><br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Owner</b>                                                                                                | <b>Importance</b><br><br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | <b>Timescale</b><br><br>Short term – 1 year<br>Medium term – 3 years<br>Long term – 3+ years | <b>Resources</b>                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full Council in accordance with DPS timeline.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Officer (LDP Lead)                                                                                          |                                                |                                                                                              |                                                                             |
| Attribute 7: Continue to develop the use of digital technology to deliver the planning service e.g. online submission, data governance, interactive mapping etc.                                                                                                          | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | Principal Planner (DM), Digital Team                                        |
| Attribute 7: Identify opportunities and new ways of working using GIS, to enable the Planning Service to be more efficient and effective. This will include sharing good practices via Heads of Planning and other GIS specialised groups and attending training courses. | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               | Medium                                         | Medium                                                                                       | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead), Digital Team |
| Attribute 8: Continue recruitment process to achieve full staff complement                                                                                                                                                                                                | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                               | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)               |



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 9: the planning authority has good customer care

Does the planning authority have the ability to offer pre-application advice where it is requested?

The Planning Authority operated a formal, charged-for pre-application advice service during the 2023/24 reporting period. This has since been suspended due to staffing issues. It is anticipated that we will offer pre-application advice on a formal basis when we achieve a fuller complement of staff.

Has the planning authority held regular engagement events with developers and communities?

As part of the early evidence gathering for LDP3 the following engagement activities were undertaken:

- LDP3 Pre-Engagement Survey (May 2023)
- Your Place Surveys (September 2023)
- Play Sufficiency Assessment (Feb – April 2023)
- Local Action Plans (ongoing)
- Local Place Plans (ongoing)
- Transport and Place School Engagement Workshops (April/May 2023)

Further information is provided under Attribute 10.

In relation to development plan preparation, the Council will continue to undertake regular engagement commensurate with each stage in the LDP preparation process and in accordance with the Participation Statement. Engagement on a suite of Topic Papers is programmed for April 2024.

With regard to planning applications, the Development Management team facilitates meetings with applicants and other stakeholders as and when required.

Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that customers are satisfied with the service offered by the planning authority?

During 2023/24, we do not have a specific Planning customer and stakeholder survey in place. It is anticipated that this will be addressed in the future as LDP3 progresses.

The East Renfrewshire annual Citizens' Panel provides a means for residents to give their views on services and other important issues. The results show that although the percentage of survey respondents rating the Planning and Building Standards service as 'very good' has risen, the overall satisfaction with the Service by the respondents on the Citizen's Panel (who may not have used the service) has fallen between the 2022 and 2024 surveys as follows:

| Rating    | 2022 | 2024 |
|-----------|------|------|
| Very Good | 14%  | 17%  |
| Good      | 42%  | 35%  |
| Poor      | 22%  | 21%  |
| Very Poor | 21%  | 27%  |

[2022 Citizens Panel](#) [2024 Citizens Panel](#)

## Attribute 10: the planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities

Does the planning authority have a community engagement strategy and infrastructure in place to ensure engagement is early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate?

East Renfrewshire Council supports an inclusive and proactive approach to engagement and collaborative working, offering all stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the plan-making process. The development of the draft LDP3 Evidence Report benefited from a collaborative approach to data and spatial analysis with Key Agencies and other stakeholders, alongside consultation and engagement with various organisations and the community.

The first stage in preparing LDP3 involved understanding how communities and stakeholders wanted to engage with LDP3 and receive updates. Two pre-engagement surveys, the 'Participation Survey' and the 'Youth Engagement Survey,' were published to gather views. These surveys also raised awareness of LDP3 and the future timeline for the Plan's preparation. The results informed the Participation Statement in the Development Plan Scheme.

A 4-week consultation commenced on 3rd May 2023 and ended on 31st May 2023. The surveys were published on the Council's Local Development Plan engagement hub, through the Council's LDP3 website, Facebook and Twitter accounts and email notifications were also sent to individuals and organisations listed on the LDP contact database.

In total, we received 221 responses from a range of organisations and members of the public to the Participation Survey; and 14 responses were received to the Youth Engagement Survey.

The Youth Engagement Survey gathered data on place-based themes. Respondents were asked to: detail how they felt about where they lived; let us know what features of East Renfrewshire they were satisfied and dissatisfied with; and what they thought the biggest issues were where they live.

The [Development Plan Scheme Participation Statement 2024](#) sets out the agreed methods of engagement that will be undertaken as the plan progresses through its various stages.

[Has the planning authority undertaken community engagement, for example consistent and effective use of the Place Standard Tool, to inform decision-making processes?](#)

[Has the planning authority engaged with a good representation of the community including young people, gypsies and travelers, people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds?](#)

As part of the early evidence gathering for Local Development Plan 3 the Council used a number of different methods to support engagement with stakeholders.

Section 16b of the 2019 Planning Act requires the Council to seek the views of: the public; children and young people; and Key Agencies, and to have regard to those views when preparing the Evidence Report and the Proposed Plan.

The Evidence Report will also include a statement on how the planning authority seeks views from: the public; children and young people; disabled people; Gypsies and Travellers; the Development Industry and Community Councils, and how these views have been taken into account in the report. Officers continue to ensure that stakeholders from a range of backgrounds and with protected characteristics are engaged within the LDP process.

The following outlines engagement and activities that the Council has undertaken and how information and evidence gathered influenced and informed the Evidence Report and will help shape the direction of LDP3.

#### Your Place Surveys (11th September 2023 and ended on 16th October 2023)

Three surveys were published:

- Your Place Children's Survey (specifically for ages 5 – 12) in partnership with ERC Education Services
- Your Place Survey (for all ages)
- Your Place Young People Survey (specifically for ages 13 – 25)

The survey went through a series of questions using the Place Standard Tool. The Place Standard Tool provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place and allows the user to think about the physical elements of a place as well as the social aspects.

### Local Action Plans (ongoing)

Local Action Plans (LAPs) are being developed using a placed-based approach and will help identify and develop short-, medium- and long-term projects. It will also allow the coordination of action and investment to improve the quality of life for our communities.

### Transport and Place School Engagement Workshops (April/May 2023)

A series of Transport and Place Workshops were undertaken throughout April and May 2023 with local Primary Schools to gather evidence for both the new LDP and the Local Transport Strategy. The workshops focused on “place” and looked at elements of the Place Standard Tool/the six principles of a successful place for prompts and young people’s experiences moving around and interacting with their local environment.

### Play Sufficiency Assessment (Feb-April 2023)

In preparing the Play Sufficiency Assessment the Council has consulted:

- Children and young people;
- Parents and carers;
- Community Councils; and
- The public

This was undertaken using the following methods:

- An online Quality Assessment
- A Children and Young People’s Quality Assessment Consultation
- A Community Councils Quality Assessment Consultation

### LDP3 Evidence Report Topic Paper Engagement (April 2024)

Engagement on the suite of draft Topic Papers is programmed for April 2024. This will allow stakeholders interested in LDP3 to review the draft Topic Papers and to share their comments. The aim of the engagement will be to establish areas of agreement or disagreement and any additional evidence that should be taken into account.

Early drafts of the Topic papers were submitted to Key Agencies, and their comments have been incorporated into revised documents. These revised documents will be subject to the wide engagement mentioned above.

The Planning Service also engaged with the following groups in preparing the draft Evidence Report:

- Youth Parliament Representatives
- Disability groups and disabled people such as the East Renfrewshire Disability Action Group (ERDA).



- Gypsy and Traveller Community utilising the resources prepared by MECOPP
- Faith Groups
- Community Councils

#### Has the planning authority supported the production of Local Place Plans when requested?

Local Place Plans are intended to be community-led and collaboratively produced plans setting out proposals from communities about how land is used in their area. Proposals can include community facilities, new homes, better streets, greenspaces and action to support well-being and community activity. Once Plans are registered with the Planning Authority, they help inform the new Local Development Plan (LDP).

A Local Place Plans (LLP) webpage with a response form went live on the Council's website in June 2023 inviting groups interested in producing a Local Place Plan to submit a note of interest. The webpage provided information on LLPs, their purpose and who might consider preparing one. A deadline of March 2024 for registration of LPPs was set for LLPs to be fully considered during preparation of the Local Development Plan, but this deadline was not absolute, and the guidance invited LPP submission after this date with the understanding they would have less influence on Local Development Plan content.

Following the launch of the webpage individual emails inviting notes of interest were sent to potential groups including community Councils, community trusts and Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire an independent charity with connections across the voluntary sector. A follow up email was sent to the same list of contacts in February 2024, again inviting notes of interest and the offer to discuss ideas further.

To date there have been no notes of interest, but the webpage remains active, and any future request will be responded to positively even though the ability of an LPP to inform the LDP will diminish in the later stages of the LDP process.

#### Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that stakeholders are satisfied with their collaboration with the planning authority?

See response under Attribute 9.

### Improvement Action Plan (Engage theme)

In relation to the Engage theme the proposed scoring for Attributes 9 and 10 are:

| Attribute                                                                                                | Score<br>(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, the proposed areas of required improvement are listed below noting who is responsible for delivering the action and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

| <b>Improvement Action</b><br><br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                            | <b>Owner</b>                                                                                                | <b>Importance</b><br><br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | <b>Timescale</b><br><br>Short term – 1 year<br>Medium term – 3 years<br>Long term – 3+ years | <b>Resources</b>                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 9: Hold engagement events in preparation of the Evidence Report.                                                          | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                                                       | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | Strategy Team                                                                                               |
| Attribute 9: Continue to offer pre-application advice and review process on annual basis                                            | Principal Planner (DM)                                                                                      | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | DM Team                                                                                                     |
| Attribute 9: Build on existing tools and develop new ways to improve customer service, utilising digital technology where possible. | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Strategy Team, DM Team                                        |
| Attribute 9: Contribute planning service related questions to annual Citizen's Panel survey.                                        | Communities and Transformation, Head of Place                                                               | High                                           | Short                                                                                        | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |
| Attribute 10: Continue to work together with communities to encourage the development and delivery of Local Place Plans.            | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                                                       | Medium                                         | Long                                                                                         | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                                                       |



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 11: the planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places

Is the planning authority aware of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, the evidence that sits behind them and is it using them in decision-making processes?

Has the planning authority identified tools and approaches to delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places and is implementing them?

The current LDP2 and the emerging LDP3 provide the opportunity to prioritise placemaking principles within the Plan, ensuring they underpin all thematic and technical policies. The LDP aims to embed strong placemaking principles within its policy framework, promote the concept of Local Living, and incorporate these into future master plans and development briefs.

The Council is supporting the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places through the use of the following methods.

### Place Standard Tool

- The Council has used the Place Standard Tool to support development of the current and emerging local development plans (LDP2 & LDP3). Please see Attribute 10 above for further information.

### Six qualities of a successful place

- [LDP2](#) prioritises the importance of design and placemaking to protect and enhance East Renfrewshire's built and natural environment, cultural heritage, and biodiversity. Establishing high design standards in new developments is key for successful placemaking. LDP2 requires that proposals follow a design-led approach and adhere to the six qualities of a successful place.

- Applicants are encouraged to engage in early pre-application discussions with the Council and relevant infrastructure providers, concluding these discussions before submitting any planning applications. These discussions should facilitate improvements to schemes prior to submission, resulting in higher quality developments.

### Local Living

- To support the implementation of NPF4 Policy 15 the Council has developed a draft Local Living GIS interactive online mapping toolkit. This is outlined in the draft LDP3 Evidence Report.
- The tool provides insights as to how communities in East Renfrewshire are currently able to meet their daily needs locally, across a range of indicators including those associated with place and wellbeing outcomes.
- The toolkit will support preparation of LDP3 and decision making across multiple service areas and Council processes.

## Attribute 12: the planning authority supports the delivery of consented development

Has the planning authority provided clear and proportionate expectations of Section 75 agreements and set these out in the LDP and pre-application discussions and they are concluded within 6 months of resolution to grant?

LDP2 Strategic Policy 2 and the accompanying Development Contributions Supplementary Guidance clearly sets out that new development must be accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure and services required to support new or expanded communities. It sets out the expectation that where new developments individually or cumulatively generate a future need for new or enhanced infrastructure provision, services or facilities, the Council will require the development to meet or proportionately contribute to the cost of providing or improving such infrastructure.

The policy and guidance make clear that any development contributions sought will fairly and reasonably relate in scale to the proposed development and will be required in order to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms, all in accordance with the policy tests of NPF4 and Circular 3/2012: Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements. The guidance outlines detail on how planning obligations are calculated and provides information on securing requirements by planning obligation or legal agreement. There are a wide range of facilities and infrastructure requirements that may be necessary in order to make a development acceptable in planning terms, such as Education; Community Facilities; Healthcare; Parks and Open Space; Transportation Infrastructure; Active Travel; and Green Infrastructure and Networks.

The Council provides a dedicated single point of contact for all planning obligation matters. The Planning Service encourages early discussions with landowners and developers, and detailed planning obligation advice is often provided by the Principal Strategy Officer (Planning Obligations Lead) at pre-application stage. The Principal Officer leads on the development and application of the Council's planning obligation policies and manages all Section 75 agreements to ensure consistency of application and compliance. The Principal Officer also ensures that the obligations set out in the agreements are delivered and monies arising are received and that the terms of the agreement are complied with. The context and justification of conditions are set out in reports of handling.

The Planning Service proactively manages Section 75 legal agreements and works collaboratively with Legal Services to secure the timely conclusion of agreements. It is noted however that the time taken to conclude legal agreements is also reliant on the applicant, their agents, landowners and any other consenters. Often delays are outwith the control of the Council and developer, particularly where there are multiple landowners and consenters involved (all of whom need to reach agreement and provide sign off). If there are unreasonable delays, or it has been determined that there is no prospect of a successful conclusion, enforcement of desired timescales will take place with the application being reported back to the Planning Applications Committee.

#### Does the planning authority take a proportionate approach to imposing conditions?

During the 2023/24 reporting period, the planning authority was in a position to offer formal pre-application advice. This provided applicants with the opportunity to submit applications with mitigation built in, thus reducing the need to impose conditions. Nevertheless, there will always be occasions where it is necessary to impose conditions to mitigate the effects of a development proposal. In such cases, the case officers are mindful of legislation and the advice set out in 4/1998. The planning authority will always ensure that conditions are necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects and we believe that appropriate numbers of meaningful conditions have been applied to applications determined in the period 2023/24.

#### Does the planning authority have an ambitious local housing land requirement that exceeds the Minimum All Tenure Housing land requirements in NPF4 and is it on track to support delivery?

East Renfrewshire's Housing Land Requirement (HLR) is established through the Housing Need Estimates set out in the Glasgow City Region Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 (HNDA3); the minimum all-tenure housing land requirement (MATHLR) set out in the adopted NPF4; and the emerging Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Housing Supply Targets which reflect the strategic vision and housing priorities for the area.

NPF4 sets out the 10-year Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each local authority area. For East Renfrewshire the MATHLR is shown as 2800 homes over a 10-year period, which averages at 280 per annum.

The draft LDP3 Evidence Report Topic Paper 013: Housing sets out a clear and transparent approach to the methodology and what has been considered in setting the indicative HLR.

An indicative 10-year housing land requirement for 3100 homes has been developed for LDP3 and is set 11% higher than the NPF4 housing figure (MATHLR). The draft LDP3 Evidence Report is programmed to be reported to the Council for approval in September 2024.

The Council's Housing Land Audit is also being adapted to become a housing delivery pipeline as required by NPF4. The delivery pipeline will provide information to support house building and identify constraints to delivery and, where possible, how these can be overcome.

**Are the number of processing agreements the planning authority has agreed with applicants increasing?**

The number of processing agreements the planning authority agreed with applicant during the period 23/24 did not increase on previous years. This is mainly a result of the decreasing number of major and larger scale housing developments as LDP2 did not allocate large new housing sites, in turn a result of school capacity issues. It was those types of applications that were subject to processing agreements in previous years. The planning authority values the use of processing agreements and will encourage their use once sites released through LDP3 reach the development application stage.

**Does the planning authority have an effective delivery programme in place that supports the delivery of development on the ground?**

Following the adoption of Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) (March 2022) the Council published an Action Programme (June 2022) that outlined the actions, infrastructure, and investment required to support the implementation of the LDP2 spatial strategy, policies and proposals.

The Scottish Government advised that existing LDP Action Programmes should be reviewed and replaced by a new-style Delivery Programme due to changes in the planning system from the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act. Consequently, the LDP2 Action Programme will be updated and renamed as the LDP2 Delivery Programme by 31 March 2025.

## **Improvement Action Plan (People theme)**

In relation to the People theme the proposed scoring for Attributes 9 and 10 are:

| <b>Attribute</b>                                                                                | <b>Score<br/>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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, the proposed areas of required improvement are listed below noting who is responsible for delivering the action and their level of importance (High/ Medium/ Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

| <b>Improvement Action</b><br><br>What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be?                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Owner</b>                                                                             | <b>Importance</b><br><br>High<br>Medium<br>Low | <b>Timescale</b><br><br>Short term – 1<br>year<br>Medium term – 3<br>years<br>Long term – 3+<br>years | <b>Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attribute 11: Contribute to corporate and community strategic planning including ERC Community Plan, Glasgow City Region Regional Spatial Strategy                                                                                                                                              | Head of Place, Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager                              | High                                           | Short-Long                                                                                            | Communities and Transformation, Glasgow City Region Place Team, ERC Head of Place, Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead) |
| Attribute 12: Continue to plan and prioritise of Planning Obligation spend across various ERC departments through streamlining a project pipeline. This will ensure timely identification of suitable projects and, where possible, avoid the need to return non-committed funds to developers. | Principal Strategy Officer (Planning Obligations Lead)                                   | High                                           | Medium                                                                                                | Principal Strategy Officer (Planning Obligations Lead)                                                                                                                 |
| Attribute 12: Revising existing LDP2 Action Programme to Delivery Programme in accordance with Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2019                                                                                                                                                                | Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                                    | High                                           | Short                                                                                                 | Strategy Team                                                                                                                                                          |
| Attribute 12: Consider the benefits of introducing a Design Panel                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy | Medium                                         | Medium                                                                                                | Chief Planner and Building Standards Manager, Principal Planner (DM), Principal Strategy Officer (LDP Lead)                                                            |

| Improvement Action                                      | Owner                 | Importance            | Timescale                                                                     | Resources |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| What action will you take?<br>What will the outcome be? |                       | High<br>Medium<br>Low | Short term – 1<br>year<br>Medium term – 3<br>years<br>Long term – 3+<br>years |           |
|                                                         | Officer (LDP<br>Lead) |                       |                                                                               |           |