



SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024





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

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

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

Improvement Action	Owner	Importance	Timescale	Resources
What action will you take? What will the outcome be?		High Medium Low	Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	
Attribute 1: Continue to support and encourage our non RTPI chartered officers to obtain RTPI chartership	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	LONG	EXISTING STAFF RTPI SIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Attribute 1: Support Mentoring of Staff within the service, including opportunities for cross service working.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	LONG	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 1: Continue to develop our strategy for recruitment and professional development and examine additional methods including exploring the potential for apprenticeships and graduate placements.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	LONG	SIC HUMAN RESOURCES SIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Attribute 2: On completion of the Development Services Strategic Framework we will align with it and seek to use this to prioritise workloads within the Planning Service	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 2: Encourage a greater take up of the continuous conversations offer.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF





A high performing planning authority has a positive culture through ensuring it has sound governance, effective leadership and a commitment to continuous improvement. The authority has an identified chief planner, who is supported by a strong leadership group to advise on decision making, policy and operational management.

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

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

Improvement Action	Owner	Importance	Timescale	Resources
What action will you take? What will the outcome be?		High Medium Low	Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	



Attribute 3: Continue to promote the culture of improvement and shared learning, giving officers opportunities for upskilling.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT RTPI IMPROVMENT SERVICE
Attribute 3: Explore stronger relationships with Planning Schools to support professional Development and recruitment.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF PLANNING SCHOOLS/ UNIVERSITIES
Attribute 3: Continue to be actively involved in promoting Planning is a profession by supporting school visits, providing work experience opportunities and attending jobs fairs. Subject to staff availability and capacity	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	LONG	EXISTING STAFF SIC SCHOOLS & EDUCATION STAFF
Attribute 3: Recognise the work of officers on projects by entering awards. Gaining National recognition for work achievements.	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 4 & 5: Appoint a Chief Planning Officer as required by the Act.	Director of Development	HIGH	SHORT	SIC HUMAN RESOURCES



Attribute 5: Continue to engage in Planning Policy at National Level, feed information on particular Shetland constraints on development and implementation of NPF4 up to Scottish Government.	Director of Development. Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	LONG	EXISTING STAFF
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A high performing planning authority needs to have an effective local development plan and other strategies in place to provide a vision for the future of the area. It needs to be able to set and deliver on policy ambitions and priorities by clearly informing decision making and providing certainty and predictability for communities, developers and investment. The authority’s development management systems need to be effective in making the right decisions about development and be as efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

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

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

Improvement Action	Owner	Importance	Timescale	Resources
What action will you take? What will the outcome be?		High Medium Low	Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	



<p>Attribute 6: Continue work with the Scottish Government to pursue adoption of the Shetland Islands Regional Marine Plan in 2025 for the benefit of Shetland’s communities, environment and economy.</p>	<p>Shetland Marine Planning Partnership</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>SHORT</p>	<p>EXISTING STAFF SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT</p>
<p>Attribute 6 & 8: Engage in the Development Framework related to Energy Process to provide a strategic spatial direction for Energy growth in Shetland.</p>	<p>Director of Development, Executive Manager Planning & Team Leaders</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>SHORT</p>	<p>EXISTING STAFF ENERGY SECTOR INDUSTRIES</p>
<p>Attribute 7: Make full use of UNIFORM IT casework management system. This shall include using AI and data visualisation through Microsoft Power BI and the use of AI. Subject to Council permissions and staff resource.</p>	<p>Team Leaders Development Management & Coastal & Marine Planning Team</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>	<p>EXISTING STAFF EXISTING SOFTWARE PACKAGES</p>



Attribute 7: Develop the scope for improved data handling, sharing and analysis between Council Services	Director of Development, Executive Manager of Planning & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF SIC ICT DEPARTMENT EXISTING SOFTWARE PACKAGES
Attribute 7: Explore the potential for the Scottish Government's e- portal to accommodate submission of aquaculture planning applications	Exec. Manager Team Leader & Coastal & Marine Planning Team	MEDIUM	LONG	EXISTING STAFF SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT



A high performing planning authority should ensure a wide range of people are, involved in shaping their future places. Engagement should be fair and inclusive, early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate and should include difficult to reach groups. The authority should engage with a wide range of partners at a national, regional and local level to ensure a joined-up approach and that links are made across policies and programmes. The planning authority should demonstrate good customer care, transparency and effective communication.



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

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

Improvement Action What action will you take? What will the outcome be?	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	Resources
Attribute 9: Review and implement ways to obtain greater and more meaningful customer feedback	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF SIC COMMUNICATIONS TEAM EXISTING SOFTWARE
Attribute 9: Better record and monitor pre- app correspondence	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF EXISTING SOFTWARE



Attribute 9 & 10 Work collaboratively with stakeholders to examine the potential for introducing fees for pre- application advice and works licences	Exec. Manager Team Leader Development Management & Team Leader Coastal & Marine Planning	MEDIUM	LONG	EXISTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS
Attribute 9 & 10: Be more proactive in setting up regular key agency engagements meetings. Aim to meet quarterly	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 10: Continue to support communities to develop local place plans and aim to investigate ways to support issues with community capacity	Team Leader Development Plans & Heritage	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF PLANNING AID SCOTLAND NEW TECHNOLOGIES
Attribute 10: Continue to provide input into improvement projects and pilots for the Consenting Task Group for Aquaculture	Team Leader Coastal & Marine Planning	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF



Attribute 10: Hold regular meetings with development industry stakeholders (both terrestrial and aquaculture planning) and explore more effective ways of working together	Exec. Manager & Team Leaders	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS
Attribute 10: Develop a programme of youth engagement on placemaking	Team Leader Development Plans & Heritage	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF



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

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
11. The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	3



12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	3
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Based on the grading above, outline any areas of improvement that are required and by whom and their level of importance (High/Medium/Low) and by when (short/ medium/ long term).

Improvement Action What action will you take? What will the outcome be?	Owner	Importance High Medium Low	Timescale Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	Resources
Attribute 11: Promote the use of Processing agreements in Marine Development pilot projects	Team Leader Coastal & Marine Planning	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 11: Undertake a review of conditions	Team Leaders Coastal & Marine Planning Team & Development Management Team	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	EXISTING STAFF
Attribute 12: Convert Action Programme to Delivery Programme	Team Leader Development Plans & Heritage Team	HIGH	SHORT	EXISTING STAFF

