

Recruiting, Developing and Retaining Staff



Context

The planning profession in Scotland, particularly in the public sector, faces challenges with an aging workforce, a growing percentage of planners working in the private sector, and fewer planners coming into the profession (Source: RTPi). Focusing on building a workforce for the future, we have put in place actions to address staff training, to enable career progression and to share knowledge and experience. This work has been ongoing for several years and has demonstrable success while still ongoing as we continue to look for opportunities to build in resilience to our team.

What Happened

From 2021 to date we have:

- Mentored and supported for our planning technicians to upskill and get more experience through dealing with planning validation, training in the use of ArcGIS and enhance their qualifications.



- Supported two planning technicians through university to get a Post Graduate Certificate in Spatial Planning.
- Created opportunity for our newly qualified technicians to become planning assistants.
- Introduced a new career planner grade allowing planning assistants who achieve chartered status with the RTPI to progress to officer grade.
- Collaborated with the councils Talent and Organisational Development team to support the University of West of Scotland in the development of a new undergraduate planning degree (anticipated to be introduced in September 2025).
- Provided in-house development opportunities through the North Lanarkshire Council Learning Academy for existing staff to gain develop leadership potential.

We have introduced non-planning roles with key skill sets to strengthen the team. The senior project officer and data analyst posts have been specifically created to support programme planning, data management and analysis, and performance reporting allowing planners to focus on their core duties.

Our corporate resources raise awareness and provide a wealth of wellbeing and support on topics that will support our workforce.

Areas of Collaboration

The work has been led by Lorna Bowden, with collaboration involving staff from other local authorities and academic partners at the University of the West of Scotland.

Overall Result

We have grown our own workforce by providing support and opportunity.

We have retained qualified staff by enabling progression.

Provided opportunity for staff development to further train and develop with the outcome of having more qualified planners.

We have successfully resourced a team with a broader skillset to support future work and to ensure we meet our future commitments.

Lessons Learned

In future to open more avenues to recruit and develop qualified planners, we will consider graduate placements for people with degrees relating to planning and employ them while support them to gain experience and undertake the planning qualification.

We feel our workforce strategy supports the full range of planning outcomes.

