

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

# Improvement Action Progress Update 2025

## South Ayrshire Council



# South Ayrshire NPIF Annual Report (Year Two - 2025)

## Foreword

Welcome to South Ayrshire Council's National Planning Improvement Framework Annual Report Year Two Report. The National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) replaces the annual Planning Performance Framework.

The NPIF is based upon what has been identified as the attributes of a high performing Planning Authority. The new framework aims to better measure how planning authorities improve through incorporating attributes that better assess impacts, outcomes achieved, and the quality of the service provided, and by recognising that Planning Authorities depend on others to deliver a good quality service.

The Planning Service is looking forward to taking forward many of the tasks identified in the Report during 2026, focusing primarily on staff recruitment and Service Redesign.

## Introduction

The National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) was piloted incrementally in three separate cohorts throughout the 2024/25 financial year. This was to test a new approach to measuring the performance of planning authorities. The pilot aimed to test the new framework, to explore what works and what doesn't. This resulted in each planning authority producing an improvement action plan and performance assessment.

Each improvement action plan sets out:

- What the planning authority has agreed as its priority activities
- Whether these have short-, medium- or long-term timescales
- The owner of the actions
- The resources needed

[Link to action plan for 2023/24.](#)

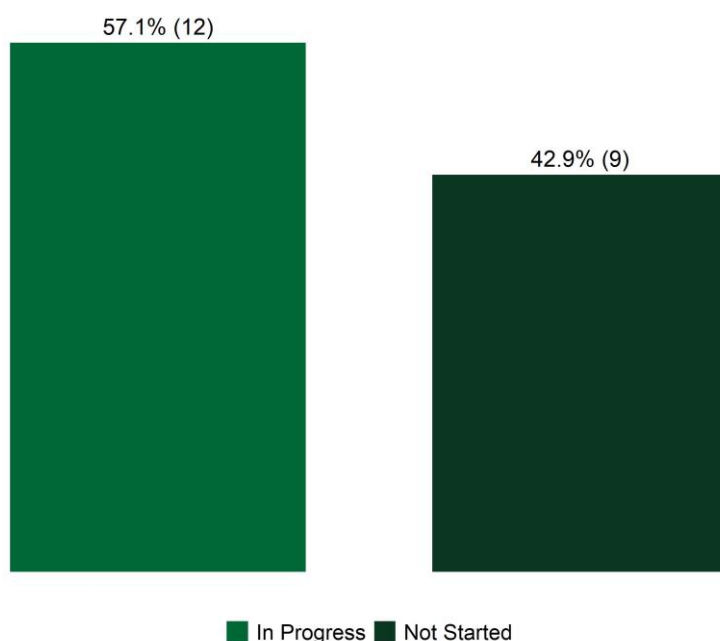
In year two of the NPIF the planning authorities are to update on their progress with the improvement actions. This report sets out the progress South Ayrshire has made, detailing any updates to actions, any further actions and plans for further collaboration with peer partners.



# Planning Improvement Actions Progress Update

This section details each of the improvement actions and the progress the planning authority has made.

**South Ayrshire has 21 improvement actions. The status of the actions is shown below:**



## Action 1: Following the Service Redesign focus will be given to filling vacancies including external vacancies that arise.

### In Progress

Progress against this action: Council Budget position has been clarified and therefore some vacancies can be filled, and the Service Redesign can now be taken forward

The following next steps are proposed: Advertise some vacancies and take forward the Service Re-Design Process

## Action 2: Support staff in regular collaborative training

### Not Started

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- The action was set as a low or medium priority.



The following next steps are proposed: Training Framework to be prepared and implemented.

### **Action 3: Carry out Skills Audit and competency matrix of Staffing resource including actions to meet gaps**

#### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- Other

The following next steps are proposed: Skills Audit to be prepared following Building Standards Framework which is currently being rolled out by Building Standards Division at Scottish Government.

### **Action 4: Provide a diagram plotting the leadership culture within the Service as a basis for discussion, amendment and then endorsement**

#### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- We have not had the time given other priorities.

The following next steps are proposed: Prepare diagram detailing Leadership Culture.

### **Action 5: Provide an example led diagram demonstrating processes to empower staff along with support provisions and then test with staff through a workshop**

#### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- We have not had the time given other priorities.

The following next steps are proposed: This will be programmed into future workstreams.

### **Action 6: Support staff in regular structured collaborative training informed by a skills review.**

#### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Initial meeting to discuss way forward.



The following next steps are proposed: Training Framework to be prepared and implemented.

## **Action 7: Install a dynamic performance and resource monitoring system to track cases-to-hand relative to resource**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Role out of Enterprise task monitoring system.

The following next steps are proposed: Progress and expand the role out of Enterprise.

## **Action 8: Re-establish Architect/Agents Forum**

### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- The action was set as a low or medium priority.

The following next steps are proposed: Arrange meeting dates for later in the 2026.

## **Action 9: Regular review working process**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Regular formal meeting timetable has been established.

The following next steps are proposed: Ensure meetings are productive and meaningful.

## **Action 10: Roll out Enterprise in Planning**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Enterprise has been implemented for Validation tasks.

The following next steps are proposed: Expand use of Enterprise to other uniform tasks.

## **Action 11: Roll out systematic basis for regular monitoring of high risk planning conditions**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Initial discussions have taken place about process required.

The following next steps are proposed: Roll out of Enterprise to monitor planning application determinations and additional performance monitoring measures.



## **Action 12: Explore greater use of the GIS maps including input training for all Planning staff**

### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- The action was set as a low or medium priority.

The following next steps are proposed: Consider format and timing of training.

## **Action 13: Explore greater use of the Uniform data base and Enterprise systems to improve efficiency**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Set up Improvement log and incorporate monthly workshop to discuss/implement.

The following next steps are proposed: Ensure meetings are productive and effective.

## **Action 14: Provide standard guidance on Roads Technical requirements to reduce need for consultations**

### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- We are relying on a partner or stakeholder to action this.

The following next steps are proposed: Meet with Ayrshire Roads Alliance to discuss.

## **Action 15: Following the Service Redesign focus will be given to filling vacancies permanently and promoting succession planning.**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Council Budget position has been clarified and therefore some vacancies can be filled, and the Service Redesign can now be taken forward.

The following next steps are proposed: Fill some vacancies and take forward Service Redesign.



## **Action 16: Obtain appropriate staff to carry out additional engagement with Public**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: A Job Description has been approved for this Role.

The following next steps are proposed: The Service Redesign aims to incorporate the Public Engagement role.

## **Action 17: Regular Customer Questionnaires**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: GDPR approval has been obtained to allow survey of customers.

The following next steps are proposed: Set a program of Customer Surveys for 2026.

## **Action 18: Preparation of an Engagement Strategy between the Planning Authority and its customers covering communication methods, meetings and Site visits**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Proposed strategy is being identified.

The following next steps are proposed: Finalise and Implement strategy.

## **Action 19: Review of Customer Charter**

### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- The action was set as a low or medium priority.

The following next steps are proposed: Review the Customer Charter during 2026.

## **Action 20: Consideration will be given to expanding the Pre application process to all application types with an aim of improving the quality of the developments**

### **In Progress**

Progress against this action: Initial discussion has taken place on appropriate Pre-application advice process.

The following next steps are proposed: Formulate clear strategy of pre-application advice.



## **Action 21: The Council to prepare an overarching framework demonstrating the relationship between Place Plans, Local Place Plans, Regeneration Strategy and other such location-based documents to help the understanding of how these various elements interact. To be used by Communities and the Council**

### **Not Started**

Reason(s) action has not been progressed:

- We are relying on a partner or stakeholder to action this.

The following next steps are proposed: Seek advice from others on progress.

## **Peer Collaborative Review Follow Up**

As part of the pilot, each planning authority held a peer collaborative review workshop. This brought together key stakeholders and customers to discuss and provide constructive feedback on the improvement action plan.

Status of the peer review follow-up meeting: Meeting arranged

Additional information: A meeting has been arranged for late March 2026 with our peer review partners in the Planning Service at Midlothian Council

