

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

# Improvement Action Plan 2024

Edinburgh Council





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

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
1. The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	3
2. The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce	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 <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
<b>Attribute 1 and Attribute 2: Prepare a People Plan specifically for the Planning Service.</b> <b>The People Plan will cover the following topics: Age profiles and succession planning; Addressing the demands of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF); Developing leadership at all levels; Employment policies; Training; Mentoring programme; Performance</b>	Team Manager – Service Improvement Team	High	Short and Medium	Service Improvement Team and additional resources from across the Planning Service (refer to Appendix 1.1 –



management; Workforce planning; and Wellbeing. The People Plan will include an objective for teams to visit projects, to come together as a group and to reflect on projects in terms of Place and Wellbeing outcomes.

The People Plan will set out how the Planning Service intend to receive staff feedback on improvements and how staff will be consulted on and involved in delivering the improvement actions.

Planning Service  
Staff Structure)





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

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

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
<b>Attribute 3: Service Improvement Plan - The Planning Service has a draft Service Improvement Plan 2024 – 2027 (SIP), which is a strategic plan that sets out how we will achieve our vision for the service over the next three years. The final version of the SIP will include a breakdown of actions identified through the NPIF process.</b>	Team Manager Service Improvement Team	High	Short	Service Improvement Team and additional resources from across the Planning Service (refer to Appendix 1.1 –



				Planning Service Staff Structure).
--	--	--	--	---------------------------------------





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	2
7. The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	3
8. The planning authority has effective and efficient decision-making processes	3

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

Improvement Action <small>What action will you take? What will the outcome be?</small>	Owner	Importance <small>High Medium Low</small>	Timescale <small>Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years</small>	Resources
<b>Attribute 7: Information Governance and GDPR Retention Record Project (Delivering Excellence Projects) - Review of policies and procedures in relation to data protection and retention as the Planning Authority holds a large amount of data given the nature of the service.</b>	Team Manager (Central and West)	High	Medium	ICT Lead Officer and resources from across the Planning Service



<b>Attribute 7: Digital Solutions - Continue to share best practice with peer authorities while exploring future approaches to horizon scanning of digital solutions and how these could support the planning service.</b>	ICT Lead Officer	Medium	Medium and long	Leadership Team and resources from across the Planning Service
<b>Attribute 8: Validation Process Project (Delivering Excellence Projects) - The project is to review and streamline the application validation process to ensure submissions are in accordance with regulations, the process makes efficient use of IT systems and provide clear information to applicants on applications requirements where possible.</b>	Team Manager - Service Improvement Team	Medium	Medium and long	Service Improvement Team and additional resources from across the Planning Service (refer to Appendix 1.1 – Planning Service Staff Structure)
<b>Attribute 8: Consultation Process Project (Delivering Excellence Projects) - There are various statutory and non-statutory consultees that play a vital role in the consideration of planning applications. The process for consultee engagement will be reviewed to ensure the process makes efficient use of IT systems, there is a clear understanding of the necessary information requirements for consultees and ensuring recommended conditions are appropriate. Explore future approaches to engagement / communication / consultation with consultees.</b>	Team Manager Service – Service Improvement Team	Medium	Medium and long	Service Improvement Team and additional resources from across the Planning Service (refer to Appendix 1.1 – Planning Service Staff Structure)





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	2
10. The planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities.	3

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

Improvement Action 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
<b>Attribute 9: Annual review of Pre-Application Advice Service to improve offering</b>	Chair of the Pre-Application Advice Service Working Group	High	Short	Pre-Application Advice Service Working Group
<b>Attribute 10: Carry out customer engagement via customer forums – exploring future strategies for</b>	Operations Managers –	High	Short	Leadership Team and additional





**engagement / communication / consultation with a range of stakeholders.**

Development  
Management and  
Policy

resources from  
across the Planning  
Service (refer to  
Appendix 1.1 –  
Planning Service  
Staff Structure)





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	2
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	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
<b>Attribute 11: Awards and Performance Accreditation Frameworks - Review Service projects and improvement activities annually to identify potential candidate submissions for awards.</b>	Operations Manager – Development Management and Policy	Medium	Short	Leadership Team and additional resources from across the Planning Service



<p><b>Attribute 12: Monitoring Process Project (Delivering Excellence Projects) - Section 44 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires Planning Enforcement Charters to include a statement in relation to the planning authority's monitoring of compliance with planning permissions which have been granted in respect of major developments.</b></p> <p><b>The project will establish the process for monitoring. In addition to requirements from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the monitoring of development contributions and conditions assist in the delivery of infrastructure and in the creation of successful places. The project will also include a review of the process relating to contributions and conditions.</b></p>	Team Manager – Enforcement	Medium	Medium to long	Enforcement Team, plus additional resources from across the Planning Service (refer to Appendix 1.1 – Planning Service Staff Structure)
---	----------------------------	--------	----------------	---

