



NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Performance Assessment Template

Cohort 2

July 2025

1. Please use this document as a template for the self-assessment. If you can please state which planning authority you are and your lead officer below.

Planning Authority:	Angus Council
Lead officer:	Jill Paterson
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2. Please provide an introduction page, setting out a bit of background to your planning authority and the purpose of the self-assessment and improvement action plan.
3. Please use the below matrix when determining what score you are giving each attribute. We ask that if you score a 1 or 2 that you provide a good practice example, a separate template for this will be provided.

 PRIORITISE	 REVIEW	 DEVELOP	 BUILD UPON	 CONSOLIDATE
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. Engage with NPI Learn from others	Review ambition Review approach taken Inform NPI Learn from others	Increase ambition in targets Review and improve implementation	Increase ambition in targets Share learning with others	Share learning with others

Introduction

The Angus Council area borders Aberdeenshire, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross. It is one of the smaller local authority areas in Scotland and is primarily rural in nature.

The Council structure comprises 7 Directorates and Planning functions sit within the Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth Directorate alongside Housing, Vibrant Communities and Environmental and Consumer Protection Services.

Planning is part of the Planning and Sustainable Growth Service, which also comprises Building Standards, Economic Development, Environment and Climate Change. The Service Leader is also the Council's Statutory Chief Planning Officer.

This report is prepared following a self-assessment led independently by 4 officers from the Development Standards and Development Planning functions.

Our Approach

Our approach was to identify two officers from each of our development standards and development planning teams to undertake the initial self-assessment. We felt this was important to hear directly the views of officers closest to the day-to-day service provision.

Further detail and assessment of key areas such as financial resources was undertaken by the Chief Planning Officer.

Peer Review Meeting

A peer review meeting took place with key customers of the Planning Service in Arbroath on the 20th May 2025.

The session was facilitated by David Leslie from Planning Aid Scotland who also provided support in advance of the session. The Champion and staff from the National Planning Improvement Team were also in attendance.

Customers both internal and external to the service attended the session and we had a good representation from the following:

- Community Councils x 2
- Consultees x 3 (Roads, Environmental Health and Archaeology)
- Elected Member x 1 (Chair of the Development Standards Committee)
- Architects/Agents x 3

The Service Leader provided an overview of the Service approach to the self-assessment and the context for the scores and identified action as circulated in advance to participants.

The review provided an opportunity to delve deeper into key attributes as prioritized by participants and relevant scores and actions.



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 1: THIS PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS SUFFICIENT RESOURCES AND SKILLS

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed

- Does the planning authority have the sufficient level of staff to carry out all activities within the required timeframes?
- 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?
- Does the planning authority received responses from consultees within the prescribed timescale when assessing planning applications?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to access the appropriate advice, expertise, evidence and data it requires?

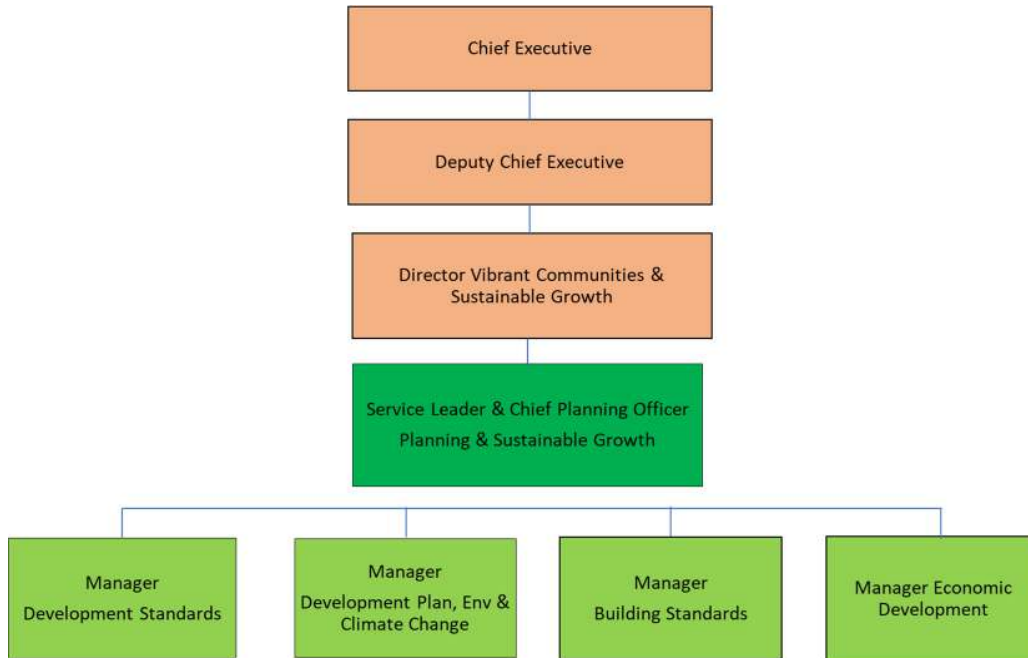
The Planning and Sustainable Growth Service

The Service comprises 4 teams covering the following functions:

- Development Standards
- Development Planning, Environment and Climate Change
- Building Standards
- Economic Development

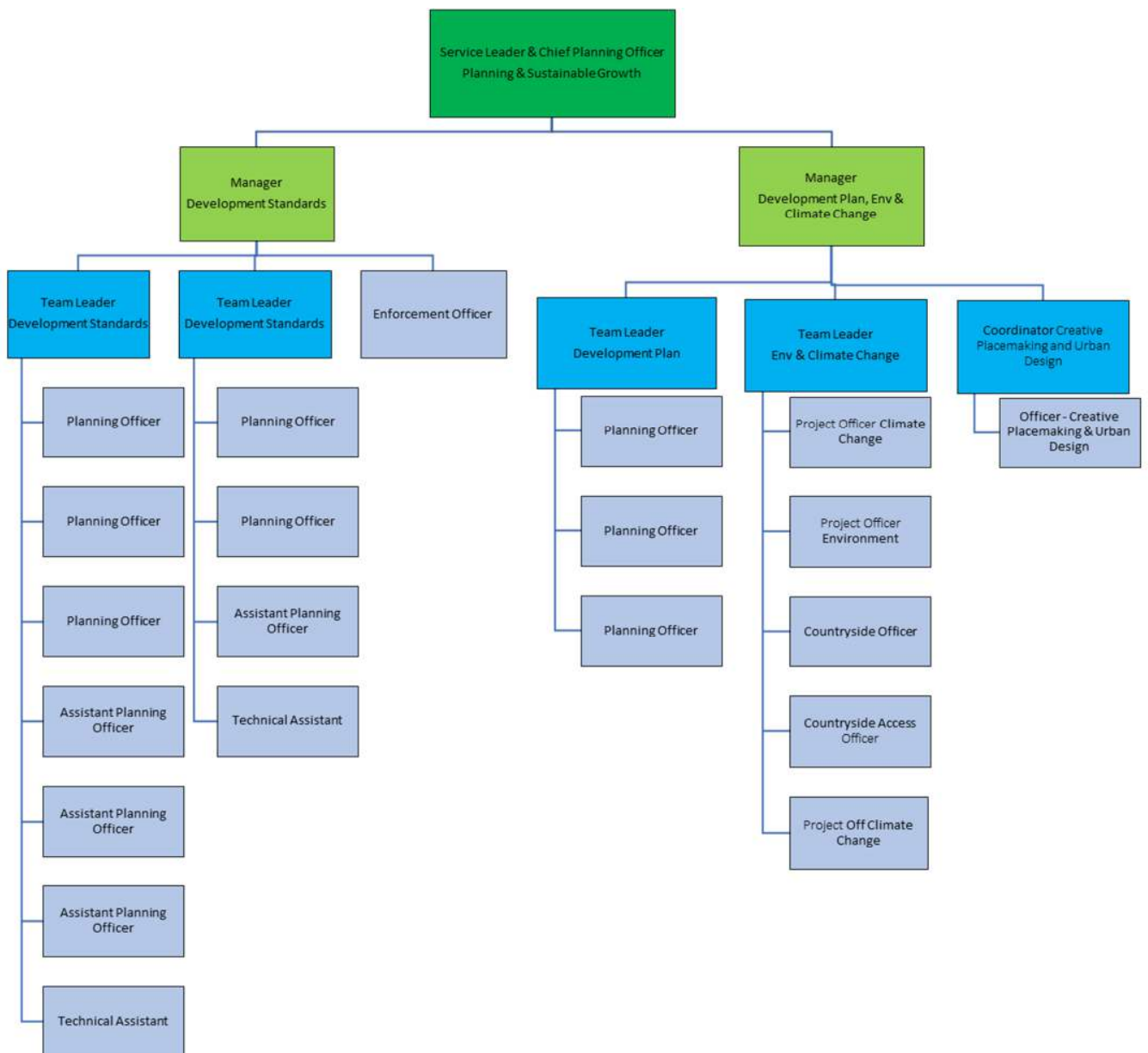
There are around 74 FTE multi-disciplinary staff across the Service and Business and IT Support is provided separately.

The Council's Senior Leadership Structure and tiers is set out in Figure 1 below:



Planning Functions and Structures Overview

The Planning functions are undertaken within the Development Standards and Development Planning, Environment and Climate Change teams of which there are 13 Full Chartered RTPI Members and 4 Licenciate Members.



Developments Standards

The Development Standards Team comprises 15 x FTE members of staff and is led by a Manager who is supported by 2 x Team Leaders (all RPTI Members). In the past few years there have been changes to how the teams have been structured. Most recently, the teams report to the Team Leaders and are split geographically to cover the inland area and coastal area. Generally, the major planning applications are picked up by the Team Leaders who also undertake the sign-off of delegated reports.

Committee functions, including the presenting of reports is undertaken by the Manager and Team Leaders, supported by the Chief Planning Officer.

There are 5 x FTE Planning Officers (RTPI) within the team and 4 x FTE Assistant Planning Officers. The team is also supported by an Enforcement Officer who reports directly to the Manager and 2 x FTE Technical Assistants who undertake the registration, support validation, process fees and issue decision notices.

An overview of the functions of the Development Standards team is provided below:

- Validate/Register Applications.
- Publish Required Adverts and Process Fees.
- Issue Decision Notices.
- Permitted Development Enquiries.
- All Types of Applications:
 - Householder/Local Planning Applications.
 - Major Planning Applications.
 - Advertisement Applications.
 - Listed Building Applications.
 - Conservation Area Consent.
 - Prior Notifications.
 - Other Certificates – e.g. Certificates of Lawful Use.
- Section 36 and Section 37 Consultation Responses.
- Condition Monitoring.
- Enforcement.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening and Scoping.
- Planning Appeals.
- Performance Reporting.
- Customer Charters.

[Development Plan, Environment and Climate Change Teams](#)

The Development Plan, Environment and Climate Change team comprises 12 x FTE members of staff and is led by a Manager, supported by 3 x Team Leaders.

An overview of the functions of the Development Plan team is provided below:

- Local Development Plan.
- Supplementary Guidance.
- Planning Advisor Role to Local Review Body.
- Urban Design and Placemaking.
- Planning Policy.
- Regional Spatial Strategy/Strategic Planning.
- Relevant Audits (e.g. HLA, ELA, SVDLS).

- Framework Approach to Place Based Working.
- Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Habitat Regulations Assessment.
- Equality Impact Assessment and Fairer Scotland Duty.
- Planning with Children and Young People.

An overview of the functions of the Environment and Climate Change team is provided below:

- Landscape Assessment.
- Tree Preservation Orders.
- Forestry and Woodland Strategy.
- Open Space Strategy.
- Biodiversity, including Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Reporting.
- Paths and Access.
- Climate Change Statutory Reporting.
- Climate Change Action Plan.
- Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan.
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy.
- River South Esk Catchment Partnership.
- Nature and Climate Projects.

Budgets and Income

Planning application fee income for 2023/24 was £997,050 which was significantly higher than our previous 3 year average and the income target of £749,000. Any excess income is not ringfenced for use in future years.

Despite this there are ongoing budgetary pressures related to the number of new unfunded duties, complexity of applications received and increases to external costs such as software.

Consultations

A reduction in support and input from the Key Agencies has seen an increase in the volume and complexity of work for internal consultees. Despite these pressures input from internal consultees has been good however there are a number of single points of failure across the Council.

Self-Assessment Summary

- There are single points of failure across the team which has significant impacts.
- Stretched resources and gaps across the Council in key areas impacts on the support available to the service.
- Difficulties with recruiting experienced staff where vacancies arise.
- Workloads, data gathering, and engagement have all increased.

Peer Review Summary

- Pull back of key agency involvement but not corresponding increase in Local Authority support.
- Make more of in-house training opportunities
- Current focus on retention of staff rather than developing the workforce.
- Challenges of hybrid working with preference for staff to be in the office more.

ATTRIBUTE 2: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS A VALUED AND SUPPORTED WORKFORCE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have a workforce planning strategy in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to support staff development and upskilling and send staff on relevant courses?
- Does the planning authority have a deliverable commitment to support staff health and wellbeing?

Council Workforce Planning Strategy

The Council has an overall workforce plan which has nine areas of focus as set out below.

- Employee health and wellbeing.
- Retention of our workforce.
- Developing our workforce.

- Digital.
- Leadership and management development.
- Workforce profiling and planning.
- Developing our young workforce.
- Employee and Trade Union Engagement.
- Reward and recognition.

Service Workforce Planning Strategy

All Services are expected to consider the workforce strategy relevant to their area within relevant Service Plans. Quarterly data packs are provided to all Service Leaders and Fit for the Future surveys are carried out across the Council on a quarterly basis.

The Service has previously had a very fixed structure for several years with no opportunities for entry level positions. An ageing workforce profile, alongside opportunities elsewhere, has resulted in a number of experienced officers leaving the Council with corresponding difficulties to recruit officers with experience to those posts.

There has been significant work undertaken in the last few years to reshape posts and structures to provide alternative opportunities to join the Service. Close working with the University of Dundee on live student projects was also undertaken to raise awareness of the opportunities in a local authority such as Angus.

As a small Local Authority, providing support to those in training can be more challenging, especially whilst the hybrid nature of posts has enabled to recruit from further afield, this workstyle is more challenging to provide a good level of support, particularly in relation to the training of recently graduated officers at the start of their career.

Through the work the Service has undertaken to offer on the job training and development opportunities, or reprofile job descriptions to enable recent graduates to apply, we have been successful in recruiting two recent graduates and an HNC student, who we have been able to support to undertake the required planning training alongside flexibility in their post to undertake their studies. The structure of the undergraduate degree course at the University of Dundee and availability of financial resource to support the training has made this a realistic option.

Whilst there has been good progress in workforce development, further work remains to ensure this can be embedded as part of an overall corporate approach and create similar pathways in the long term. As present it is a very service specific solution and is dependent on funding and posts becoming vacant.

The Service is likely to experience significant resourcing issues in the immediate future and the current focus will be to seek to maintain as good as level of service as can be achieved in these circumstances. In the longer term, we will have several officers that

will be reaching retirement age, and coupled with the lack of planners coming into the profession, the resourcing issues that we are currently experiencing are likely to be exacerbated if there is not enough planners coming through that have the necessary experience to replace these officer the future.

Staff Development

The Council has recently undertaken a review of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) and Appraisal process which sees the launch of a new electronic form to record quarterly updates and undertake an annual review. Staff felt this was important as there was some inconsistency across the Council in terms of regular opportunities to share information at one to ones.

These new tools will already support the existing regular contact between staff and line managers. With hybrid workstyles in place there is less opportunity to meet in person so further work could be undertaken to support staff to spend more time in office bases. The team days are however well attended and provide opportunities to share learning and undertake case reviews.

There is good support for staff to attend external training and further development. Opportunities are shared across the teams, budgets available to support and time given to staff to attend. All three recent graduate recruits to the team were able to attend the RTPI Young Planners Conference. All those attending external training are encouraged to share learning via lunch and learn sessions.

We are limited in terms of our ability to progress internal CPD opportunities due to the size of the team so more could be undertaken in this area.

Further work could be undertaken to ensure that all Licentiate Planners are provided with via a mentor to complete their Assessment of Professional Competence (APC).

As a small Local Authority there are strong relationships across all Council Services and opportunities for staff to learn more about some of the corporate functions.

Staff Health and Wellbeing

The Fit for the Future Council wide programme provides an opportunity for staff to share information on health and wellbeing through quarterly surveys with results shared for discussion at team meetings. This is also covered at regular one to ones.

The team reported they are responsive to HR information and know where to, and feel supported to, reach out for support. All issues are actioned in line with relevant policies. The Council provides a free and confidential support service (PAM Assist) that is available to all staff.

Staff are supported to complete appropriate display screen equipment assessments for both in the office and at home and are provided with required equipment. All Development Standards staff are provided with 2 large display screens as standards to support with reading of Plans.

Self-Assessment Summary

- The Service has made good progress in developing and supporting approaches to career entry.
- There continues to be good support, training and resources available for continued staff development.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (People Theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
1. The planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity	4
2. The planning authority has a value 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 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
Work to embed workforce development and career progression, similar to current route, as part of an overall Council approach that is not solely dependent on vacancies arising.	Service Leader & Service Leader HR & OD	Medium	Medium to Long	HR & Organisational Development, Corporate Leadership Team. Continued liaison with College, University and RTPI.
Ensure staff are working in person on a regular basis both within an across teams, to improve opportunity for shared learning and development.	Managers & Team Leaders	Medium	Short	Staff within the Planning functions and across the wider Service.
Ensure quarterly reviews and annual appraisals are completed in line with the	Managers & Team Leaders	High	Short	Those with line management

new process with subsequent developed training strategy.				responsibilities within the Service.
Progress training opportunities within and across teams via lunchtime sessions where possible.	Service Leader	High	Short	Council Services
Maintain staff access to electronic resources including DCP, IDOX and Linets to allow opportunities for self-supported learning and development.	Service Leader	High	Short	Departmental budgets.



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

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority undertaken an annual assessment of its performance and acted upon areas previously identified as in need of improvement?
- Has the planning authority achieved recognition at relevant awards or through performance accreditation frameworks?
- Has the planning authority engaged in peer review, good practice exchange or improvement activities?
- Has the planning authority addressed any complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and have evidence of this and that it has learned from valid cases?

Annual Assessment of Performance

The Council's previous Planning Performance Framework highlighted significant resource challenges, including vacant posts, failure to recruit, and staff off long term through illness. These pressures have continued to be a challenge for the Service, especially in relation to the Development Planning functions.

Similar issues across a number of Council Services have also had an impact and resulted in required budget bids to procure services from external consultants.

As a result, there has been limited progress in relation to the improvement actions that were previously identified in the last Planning Performance Framework and staffing

issues has led to further delays to the preparation and production of the new Local Development Plan timetable.

Despite this, performance in relation to planning application determination timescales continues to compare favorably with the published Scottish average determination timescales. We have continued to suspend our pre-application service which has allowed us to direct resource that would otherwise have been committed to providing responses to pre-application advice rather than processing planning applications.

Recognition at Awards

The Service has not applied for any recent awards. This is due to the time that it would take to complete the application, which require resources to pull them together. This is not considered, at this time with our current resources. Therefore, we have prioritised maintain the core planning functions. As a small authority we are limited in terms of ability across the Council to apply for external funding and progress project work. We are also limited in terms of specialists to support these.

Although we are not showcasing the good work we are doing within the Service at this point, there are some great examples of the teams working across the Council, which is evidenced through the performance statistics, work with Education through the Learning for Sustainability Coordinator and Manager – Development Planning, Environment and Climate Change to embed Place within the curriculum and work with students on live issues. The work we have also done with the University of Dundee in 2023 and 2024 also shows the good work we have been involved in, giving students real life planning issues that they will encounter throughout their career.

Peer Review and Good Practice Exchange

Officers within Angus Council have continued to have an active role within Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) regularly attending and contributing to the work and discussions as part of the Development Management, Development Planning, Climate Change, Energy & Resources sub-committees and Scotwind working group. The Manager – Development Planning, Environment and Climate Change also arranges and facilitates the Community Led Action Plans and Local Place Plans benchmarking group, which is supported by the Improvement Service and involves attendance by the majority of Local Authorities. This group meets quarterly.

Officers within Angus Council have also been active through other planning forums, and through volunteering with Planning Aid for Scotland.

The Council has continued its joint working with Perth and Kinross Council through the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, and the procurement of the Archaeological Service from Aberdeenshire.

Work has also continued with the University of Dundee supporting MSc Spatial Planning students to develop a live case study, undertake a study visit and provide support to students in completing their dissertations.

Complaints Upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Planning Service has received no complaints recently that were upheld during the reporting period.

Self-Assessment Summary

- There has been limited progress in taking identified in previous improvement plans due to available resources and this continues to remain an ongoing challenge.
- Performance in relation to planning application timescales compares favorably with the Scottish average.
- Close working with the university.

ATTRIBUTE 4: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS SOUND GOVERNANCE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an effective scheme of delegation in place?
- Have all councillors who exercise a planning function undergone statutory training and is there evidence of ongoing training for members?
- Have more than x % of officer recommendations have been overturned by councillors at committee or Local Review Body.

Scheme of Delegation & Enforcement Charter

A short life member/ officer working group was setup in October 2023 to consider whether any changes were required to be made to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme of delegation in determining relevant planning applications. The group met in December 2023 with a subsequent report brought to the February 2024 meeting of the Council's Development Standards committee to report on the discussions and recommendation. Members concluded that the Council's current scheme achieves an appropriate balance between ensuring scrutiny of appropriate cases and efficiency of decision making. Committee accepted that the current scheme of delegation has helped maintain a reasonable level of performance in terms of timescales for decisions on planning applications in circumstances where staff resource has been reduced due to vacant posts.

However, members also had regard to advice from officers regarding practical difficulties associated with implementation of the current scheme and issues associated with objections that are made anonymously and/ or without a postal address.

Accordingly, members agreed that the current scheme of delegation should be retained with the following note added for clarification purposes.

** For the purpose of implementation of this scheme of delegation, objections must be based on competent planning grounds the competency having been assessed by the Chief Planning Officer; anonymous objections and/or objections that are not attributable to an identifiable and recognised postal address will not be counted as objections in terms of applying the scheme of delegation.*

The updated [Scheme of Delegation](#) was subsequently approved by Scottish Ministers.

Around 95.7% of applications are determined under delegated powers.

Training for Elected Members

All elected members receive training on Planning whether they sit on the Development Standards committee or not. This is important to assist them with carrying out planning functions, both development planning and development standards, and in responding to constituent enquiries.

Additional training is provided to those elected members who sit on the Council's Local Review Body.

Briefing sessions are also provided in relation to development planning functions.

Local Review Body

15 Local Reviews were received in 2023/24 with 50% of officers' decision upheld.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Scheme of delegation regularly reviewed resulting in limited applications to committee.
- Delegation rate to officers is 95.7% of planning applications received.
- All elected members receive planning training to enable them to fulfill their roles in the planning decision making process.

ATTRIBUTE 5: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an identified Chief Planning Officer in place?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise on corporate decision making and policy within the broader organisation?
- Is the planning authority's Chief Planning Officer a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise and support external bodies through engagement in organisations' committees, advisory groups or working groups?
- Does the planning authority have a strong leadership team that supports a culture of continuous improvement?

Chief Planning Officer

The Service Leader for Planning and Sustainable Growth is also the Council's Chief Planning Officer and is a Chartered Member of the RTPI.

With cross service responsibilities, including Placemaking and Urban Design, Environment & Climate Change, Building Standards and Economic Development the Chief Planning Officer is able to develop links and working relationships across the different functions within the Council which assists with the broader responsibilities of the role relating to the delivery of national planning priorities. The Chief Planning Officer is also the Council's champion of place and is directly involved in helping to lead the Council's transformation change.

Although the Chief Planning Officer role is not part of the Corporate Leadership team there are strong linkages at the Directorate Management team level, which also encompasses Environmental and Consumer Protection, Housing and Vibrant Communities. Through the Director there is sufficient opportunity to input at influence at the higher level despite not being directly involved.

The Chief Planning Officer attends all Development Standards Committee and also provides input to Full Council, Communities Committee, Policy and Resources Committee and Scrutiny and Audit Committee on broader matters.

Working with Managers significant work is underway to embed a corporate approach to Place that is founded in partnership with local communities, whilst also supporting wider development plan functions.

Self-Assessment Summary

- The Council has Identified Chief Planning Officer.
- Due to Chief Planning Officer role there are good linkages to different Council Departments, elected members and committees, and our Communities.
- Good progress on championing place at a corporate level
- Regular discussions and reviews of cases and awareness of external factors.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (Culture Theme)

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	2
5. This Planning Authority has effective leadership	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
Further Councillor training to support them in decision making and in application of NPF4.	Service Leader	High	Short	Legal and Governance
Work closely with the complaints team to better monitor the number and response times of complaints, and to review the nature and content of complaints to try and learn from them to reduce complaints in the future where possible	Service Leader	Medium	Medium	Service Leader
Completion of Service Plan, linked to performance measures to assist in monitoring delivery.	Service Leader	High	Medium	2 and Managers

Establish a member and officer working group to review our section 43A scheme of delegation based on experience and learning to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose,	Service Leader	High	Short	Elected members and staff from legal and democratic and planning services
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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 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 BASE

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an up to date Local Development Plan in place and/ or is on track to adoption?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Regional Spatial Strategy in place/ or on track to adoption?
- 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?
- Have the application of the Local Development Plan's policies been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review?

Development Plan and Evidence Report

The Angus Local Development Plan was adopted in 2016. A decision to prepare a new LDP under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) was made late in 2019 and set out at that time in the DPS (September 2020). Given the position at that time it was determined there would be greater benefit in preparing a

plan under the new legislative framework, removing the risk of having to immediately prepare a further new plan following adoption of the 2016 plan. The new LDP would also result in result in closer alignment with national and strategic priorities including, NPF4 and other key local authority outputs, such as the next Angus Local Housing Strategy which was approved in 2023/24.

Unfortunately delays in implementation of the Act, as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, has had a knock-on impact on the Plan preparation timetable.

During the reporting year the team has continued to experience significant resource pressures. This has led to significant challenges, issues and delays to the preparation and production of the new Local Development Plan. The Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statements over the reporting period detail and changes to the timeframe for the new LDP as required by legislation.

Other factors have also resulted in the substantial delays to the preparation of the new LDP, such as difficulties in obtaining data from Key Agencies and infrastructure providers. Coupled with existing priorities across already stretched teams across the Council and additional duties have had a dramatic impact on a small development planning team's ability to comply with them and deliver a new LDP.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Significant resourcing issues within the Development Planning Team and difficulties in obtaining data from a variety of stakeholders and Key Agencies.
- Implementation of the new and additional unfunded parts of the new Planning System have had an impact on a small Development Planning Team.
- As a result, the new Local Development Plan is significantly behind schedule.

Peer Review Summary

- Significant delay with LDP
- Previous developers/agents forum was useful
- Consideration should be given to making the report of handling more straightforward

ATTRIBUTE 7: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY MAKES BEST USE OF DATA AND DIGITAL

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?
- Does the planning authority have a data governance strategy in place for the management of planning data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use interactive web-mapping, GIS and spatial data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use digital approaches to engagement, including website, social media and other platforms?

E-Development Portal

The majority of applications (90%) are submitted via the E-Planning portal and the Service continue to promote via our website pages. At the peer review session agents advised there were significant challenges in uploading additional information to the E-Planning portal as this often required a full resubmission.

Data Governance Strategy

The document management system is hosted by Idox and we have the relevant agreements in place regarding storage of our planning data.

GIS and Spatial Data

The Planning Service makes regularly use of GIS and spatial data and this forms a key initial stage of data gathering and analysis for the evidence report. Work is being undertaken to progress a full data cleanse of existing layers within the system to ensure these are robust, up to date, and logically categorised to support our work around place and ensure we are able to make more of our data open source and accessible to communities.

Although a small GIS team we have the benefit of some good skillsets in the use of GIS amongst recent officers to join the team.

Digital approaches to engagement

The Planning Service was an early adopter of digital engagement techniques in its Development Planning function utilising the social pinpoint platform. Officers have been working with colleagues in Vibrant Communities on the procurement of a corporate solution to better drive engagement activity across the Council and provided support on the testing of options.

Work is now underway to support transition to the Engage Angus platform and development of a specific hub for engagement on place.

The Development Planning team have been working to ensure that digital approaches are embedded within the corporate consultation and engagement strategy for place based working and to input to the supporting communications strategy.

Self-Assessment Summary

- The use of digital technology is well developed within the Planning Service though our ability to develop this fully is constrained by available specialist support and the importance of identifying business needs first needs to be central to any additional activity in this area.
- There is some value in looking at how we can use digital solutions better to support case management in enforcement.
- Embedding digital technology in communication and engagement on Place Based working and within the new Local Development Plan.

Peer Review Summary

- IT issues with file transfer
- Ensure the focus is on business needs rather than digital solutions
- E-portal challenges in uploading additional information

ATTRIBUTE 8: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DECISION

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority planning have the ability to make decisions on planning applications within the required timeframes?
- Are less than x% of planning decisions overturned at appeal or judicial review?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Enforcement Charter in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to resolve enforcement cases?

Decision Making Timescales

Within the 2023/24 reporting period, the following timescales in relation to the processing of planning applications were achieved:

- Application Approval Rate – 96.5%.
- Householder Applications – 7.1 weeks (Scot Avg. 8.3).
- Non-Householder Local Applications – 9.5 weeks (Scot. Avg. 14.8).
- Major Applications – 20.1 weeks (Scot. Avg. 36.1).

Planning appeals

15 Local Reviews were received in 2023/24 reporting period with 50% of officers' decision upheld.

The following appeal cases were considered by the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA):

- Planning Permission Appeal – 1 case, dismissed.
- Enforcement Notice Appeal – 3 cases, 2 dismissed, 1 allowed.
- Listed Building Consent Appeal – 3 cases, 2 dismissed, 1 allowed.
- Planning Obligation Appeal – 1 case, allowed.
- Tree Work Consent Appeal – 1 case, allowed.
- High Hedge Appeal – 1 case, decision confirmed.

Enforcement Charter

The Planning Authority is required to keep an up-to date Planning Enforcement Charter which is required to be updated every two years. Our Enforcement Charter was last published in March 2023. The revised charter is scheduled for review and publication in January 2025.

Our Enforcement Charter seeks to provide an understandable and proportionate approach towards enforcement activity, focusing on resolving those cases that give rise to significant amenity, environmental, or safety issues. While enforcement matters are delegated to officers within the Planning Service, appeal decisions are reported to our Development Standards Committee for oversight.

The Planning Service remains committed to adhering to the timescales within the Charter; however, year on year increases in the number of enquiries and alleged planning breaches, and a reduction in the resources available to progress these, has impacted on customer care and timescales. The Planning Service is currently operating with only one enforcement officer; therefore, a decision was taken to focus on high priority cases, which has had an impact on our ability to progress lower priority enforcement cases.

We continue to offer digital processes for reporting of potential breaches of planning control, which helps ensure that as much information as possible is provided at the outset.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Decision making timescales are above the Scottish average.
- Resources within the Enforcement Function are not sufficient to deal with the number of cases received.
- Challenges remain in relation to enforcement with an increase in the volume and complexity of cases coming forward, which is impacting on customer care and the ability to deal effectively with lesser priority enforcement cases.

Peer Review Summary

- Challenges around engagement and prioritisation of enforcement
- No or poor feedback on enforcement
- Effective tracking of planning conditions needed
- Document or checklist on status of planning conditions
- Make sure consistency at validation and decision making

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (Tools Theme)

Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
6. The planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base	4
7. The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	4
8. The planning authority has effective and efficient decision making processes	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
Review LDP timescales and project management to identify opportunities to expedite key areas.	Development Plan, Environment and Climate Change Manager	High	Short	Development Plan but also available financial resource.
Direct additional resource to expedite LDP preparation	Service Leader	High	Short	Development Plan, Environment and Climate Change Manager but also available financial resource.
Reintroduce Developers/Agents forum	Service Leader	Medium	Medium	Service Leader
Review procedures for enforcement cases to publish update position statements on public access at milestones	Development Standards Manager	High	Medium	Development Standards Manager and Enforcement Officer

Progress better use of case management to track enforcement cases	Development Standards Manager	High	Medium	Development Standards Manager and Enforcement Officer
We will work to review and progress our GIS data library and layers to support the corporate approach to Place.	Development Plan Manager	High	Short	GIS team
We will investigate opportunity to implement PowerBI to support project management.	Service Leader	Medium	Medium	Resource from within the Strategic Policy team



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

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have the ability to offer pre-application advice where it is requested?
- Has the planning authority held regular engagement events with developers and communities?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that customers are satisfied with the service offer by the planning authority?

Pre-application advice

Due to available resources, we have decided to continue to suspend our pre-application advice service. This allows us to focus our resources on processing planning applications as efficiently as possible and helps to maintain performance, rather than diverting this to pre-application advice. Evidence suggests that despite pre-application advice not being offered there is no consequential impact on delays and complexities later arising in the process.

We continue to offer the function to allow members of the public to determine whether planning permission may be required or not through our 'do I need planning permission' online form and which is a free service available to the public.

Discussion and feedback from architects/agents at the peer review session recognised the position taken by the Service to continue to suspend this function; however, they highlighted the value it offered, provided it was proportionate and tailored and that a response was provided by a proposed case officer.

Engagement events with customers and communities

The Service used to hold an annual agent's forum; however, this has not taken place in recent years due to resource pressures. Feedback from those attending the peer review session suggested that these provide a useful opportunity to hear about policy changes and updates from the Service. In particular, it was felt that such a session would have been useful with the commencement of the implementation of National Planning Framework 4. An action has therefore been included to re-introduce the forum.

Consultation was undertaken in relation to our Participation Statement for the Local Development Plan to ensure we received feedback on the proposed forms of engagement. The responses and feedback were incorporated into the final version reported to Full Council. We continue to do this every year as part of the preparation of the annual Development Planning Scheme and Participation Statement.

We have provided information to Community Councils via their bi-annual meetings on the Local Development Plan process and communicated directly around our approach to local place plans. As a Service we do however recognise that delays to the preparation of the LDP mean there is a need to ensure they are kept up-to-date as regularly is possible taking into account the resources available to the Development Plan Team.

Feedback from Community Council representatives at the peer review meeting suggested a mixed response in relation to receiving advice and clarification from officers in relation to the Development Management function of the Council.

Customer satisfaction

There is a very limited response to customer satisfaction surveys and therefore a need to review our approach to make this more straightforward is required.

Self-Assessment Summary

- We recognise there is a need to provide better and more targeted information to our customers, including agents/developers and Community Councils.
- We will consider our approach to pre-application charging and look at the reintroduction of the agent's forum.
- Small teams allow for good working relationships particularly with our internal customers.

Peer Review Summary

- Pre application beneficial but needs to be tailored
- Community council shift to emails is less useful, sometimes its just clarity needed for which a conversation is more beneficial for

ATTRIBUTE 10: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY HAS EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have a community engagement strategy and infrastructure in place to ensure engagement is early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate?
- 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 travellers, people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds?
- Has the planning authority supported the production of Local Place Plans when requested?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that stakeholders are satisfied with their collaboration with the planning authority?

Engagement and Consultation Strategy for Place Based Working

As part of the move towards place based working there is a need to review, revise and incorporate all of our current engagement policies and practices into one coherent and consistent document which reflects the Council's position of working in partnership and devolving decision making to a local level. The Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statements within the reporting period have noted that we are working towards the production and publication of this Strategy.

As required by legislation we have invited Community Groups to prepare Local Place Plans and the date they are due by. This was carried out within the reporting period.

We have also been working on a unique and innovative approach to involving our young people in relation to Place and the areas in which they live. Part of this approach is integrating sustainability, climate change and place within the curriculum. Substantial progress on this was made during the reporting period.

Engagement on the Local Development Plan

Within the reporting period, good progress was made on early engagement with Elected Members, Youth MSP's, Community Council's, Key Agencies, Infrastructure providers. Gypsy and Travelling Community representatives, and agents/developers has been carried out. This process of engagement will continue as we move through the process.

The main reasons for tackling engagement on the Local Development Plan in stages is due to the resourcing within the Development Planning Team and the new and additional engagement requirements of the new Planning System have had a significant impact on the ability of a small team to progress a comprehensive engagement approach at this time.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Good progress on the preparation and production of the Engagement and Consultation Strategy for Place Based Working.
- Annual consultation on the Participation Statement is undertaken.
- Good early engagement with a range of stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Development Plan.
- Significant progress made on engaging young people and implementation of place within the Curriculum in Angus.
- Resourcing issues within the Development Plan Team and delays to the Engagement and Consultation Strategy are impacting on the ability to carry out comprehensive and cohesive engagement on the LDP.

Peer Review Process

- Simplification of the process, not able to demonstrate meaningful input
- Role of community council to get broader engagement
- Ensure engagement improvements are addressing feedback

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (Engage Theme)

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.	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 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
Review and digitise customer satisfaction approach associated with development standards	Development Standards Manager	Medium	Medium	Staff resource within the Development Standards team
Review validation standards across the team to ensure consistency in application.	Development Standards Manager	Medium	Medium	Development Standards Manager
We will implement a regular review of legacy cases to ensure there is continued progress.	Service Leader – Planning & Sustainable Growth	High	Medium to Long	All relevant Council Services
Develop a consultation and engagement strategy to support activity around the approach to Place	Development Plan Manager	High	Short	Staff resource within the Vibrant Communities Service and Development Plan team.
Support implementation of Council wide engagement portal.	Development Plan Manager	High	Short	Staff resource within the Vibrant Communities Service

				and Development Plan team.
Provide area officer telephone numbers to Community Council planning contacts	Development Standards Manager	High	Short	Development Standards Manager
Introduce annual community council forum	Service Leader	Medium	Medium	Service Leader and Managers
Consider reintroduction of pre-application service follow review of the approach and discretionary charging schedule	Service Leader	Medium	Medium	Service Leader and Development Standards Team
Continue to support integration of place with the Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools with Education	Manager – Development Planning, Environment and Climate Change	High	Medium	Service Leader Service Leader – Education and Life-Long Learning Improvement Officer – Education Learning for Sustainability Officer - Education



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

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- 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?

Place and wellbeing outcomes

Officers from the Planning Service actively engaged in national public health working groups and have been working closely with Public Health Scotland and the Community Planning Partnership to demonstrate the close relationship with spatial planning.

Initial work is looking at how to integrate community and spatial planning more seamlessly through what we have termed a framework approach. This seeks to

rationalise and connect the various plans and strategies of the Council and partners with the needs and aspirations of our local communities through a local governance model. Central to this is better connecting data at both the Council and partnership level.

Primary healthcare data has been particularly challenging to obtain and officers have been working closely with our neighbouring Tayside authorities in Dundee and Perth and Kinross to support partners in developing and understanding some of the data required for local development plan evidence reports.

Tools and approaches to deliver sustainable, liveable and productive places

The Council has been working to deliver and approach to incorporate, implement and deliver a partnership approach to the themes of NPF 4. This is a holistic way of integrating these parts of NPF 4 within Angus, and in partnership with our communities in an evidence based, data driven and robust assessment of the towns and villages within in Angus and how they function independently and collectively. This will also allow us to identify what settlements can or cannot accommodate growth and development in terms of infrastructure, services, environmental, climate change and other place based themes.

The approach to the Evidence Report is being undertaken in relation to topics and also in terms of Place under the Council's approach to place. The Council also tendered for the production of a Renewable Energy Masterplan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will help to focus the Council's approach to renewable energy within its boundary in terms of planning and economic development.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Good progress on the integration of place and wellbeing outcomes in the context of integrating the LDP as part of the corporate approach to Place.
- Integration of approach to NPF 4 themes has been made within the approach to the structure and content of the Evidence Report.
- Difficulties in obtaining health and wellbeing data and capacity and condition information on health services within Angus.

Peer Review Summary

- Renewable Energy Masterplan should be high priority
- Discharge of conditions, not a paid service so is this less priority?
- Partner support to identify and analyse place and wellbeing outcomes and data
- Improvement actions should be broader than just a focus on renewables
- Impact of delivery – look at planning conditions, process and timescales
- Archaeology – balance of pre-application vs application (useful to provide input at very early stage)
- Discharge of conditions can cause delivery issues
- Further improvement actions needed but difficult to pin down what
- Need to get the message out better regarding information upfront

ATTRIBUTE 12: THE PLANNING AUTHORITY SUPPORTS THE DELIVERY OF

Please consider the following when thinking about this attribute and how you have performed over the last year:

- 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?
- Does the planning authority take a proportionate approach to imposing conditions?
- 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?
- Are the number of processing agreements the planning authority has agreed with applicants increasing?
- Does the planning authority have an effective delivery programme in place that supports the delivery of development on the ground?

Section 75 agreements

Our Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance sets out the type and level of where developer contributions and affordable housing are required. Officers have worked to support colleagues in Education to develop and refine their approach to school roll forecasts, taking into account all planned and committed residential development, to ensure these are robust. As a result of this work and the subsequent publication of the forecasts, we have updated our Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing and will consult and fulfil the legislative procedures by the end of 2023.

Timescales for concluding Section 75 agreement remains prompt. Planning conditions are used to secure the requirement for an agreement to be in place allowing prompt issue of consents. Affordable housing delivery packages also continue to be used.

Planning conditions

The planning conditions target of 2 months is consistently met. At present the Service does not charge for the discharge of planning conditions however feedback from the peer review session suggested that there could be some value if this helped to better track the status of planning conditions.

Local housing land requirement

The latest Tayside Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) received robust and credible status from the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis in May 2023.

The proposed local housing land requirement will be set out in the Evidence Report informed by the HNDA and more recent update work undertaken by our Housing Service to prepare their Local Housing Strategy.

The 2023 Housing Land Audit provides information on the Angus Local Housing Requirement and the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR). The MATHLR for Angus is expressed as 2,550 houses over a 10-year period, which equates to a minimum requirement for Angus of 255 houses per annum. The established land supply in Angus as of the 31st March 2023 was 3,696 units.

NPF4 MATHLR 10-Year Requirement	2,550 units
Angus HLA 2023 Established Land Supply	3,696 units
Angus HLA 2023 Effective Land Supply (2023-2033)	2,546 units

Processing agreements

We positively encourage the use of Planning Processing Agreements (PPA) in relation to applications for national, major and significant or complex local developments. The availability of PPA is outlined in pre application advice for relevant application types and the use of PPA is promoted on our website. We publish PPAs agreed with applicants on our website to give interested parties clarity on progress in determining the application and to explain any delays in deciding the application.

Delivery Programme

The LDP Action Programme for 2024 will be prepared and produced as a Delivery Programme and this will be presented to Council in the 2024/25 period.

Self-Assessment Summary

- Overall, the Service is making fair progress as we support the delivery of appropriate development.
- The peer review identified scope for improvement in how we better track planning conditions and share information about the status of these with external parties. This will be undertaken in the context of our improvement actions related to Attribute 8.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN (People Theme)

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
Consider preparation of a renewable energy masterplan to support the evidence base for the LDP and to provide a proactive approach to future decision making.	Development Plan Manager	High	Short	External resource required to progress. Economic Development
Progress work to embed approach to Place and local governance at a Corporate level.	Service Leader	High	Short	Resource from within the Service and Service Leader Vibrant Communities