



East Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

is.
improvement service

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

East Ayrshire 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 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 1&3: Review of the Enforcement Function to encompass staffing, workload and digital and to increase the capacity of the enforcement function through upskilling of planning officers.	Planning Service	High	Short (to undertake) Medium (to implement)	Service Managers/ Enforcement Officers/ Development Management Team Leaders



Attribute1: Undertake a Specialist Skills Review in the Delivery of NPF4 and LDP3 and relate to Service Structure. We will feed the outcome of this review to the Improvement Service and HOPS to assist with the development of the Planning Hub.	Planning Service/ Improvement Service	High	Short (to undertake) Medium (to implement)	Service Managers/ Greener Communities/ Environmental Health
Attribute 2: Undertake Workforce Strategy. We will work with the Council's Organisational Development and HR Chief Planning Medium Short (undertake) Service Managers/ Planning Staff sections and external partners to deliver a pipeline of future leaders and skilled practitioners by ensuring that appropriate skills and training is provided. We will explore the possibility of utilising modern /graduate apprenticeships, working with the Council's Employability Service and University of the West of Scotland to deliver a future workforce. We will consider the impact of the Planning Hub on the service including our needs, skills and resources to ensure we maximise the output of our workforce.	Chief Planning Officer/ Governance Service/EAC OD, HR/ Improvement Service/ Universities/ UWS	Medium	Short term (undertake) Long term (implementation)	Service Managers/ Planning Staff
Attribute 2: Promote a positive healthy workplace culture which aligns with the Council's policies and Workforce Strategy building on meaningful work, open communication and FACE values through communication at work events, training and networking sessions within and outwith the office. Investigate and introduce measures for a less risk averse work environment.	Chief Planning Officer/ Planning Service/ Governance Service/EAC OD, HR.	Medium	Long	Planning Team/EAC Organisational Development/Service Managers/Team Leaders





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	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
Attribute 3: Review of customer feedback form and process in connection with planning decisions to facilitate easier engagement and feedback by our customers and ensure that it is properly recorded and actioned. We will seek to align this work with the national survey to be undertaken by the National Planning Improvement team.	Planning Service and Improvement Service	Medium	Medium	Development Management and technical support staff



Attribute 4: Review of scheme of delegation to bring SoD up to date and to reflect relevant pressures and priorities. This will seek to ensure that the work of committee is proportionate to the nature of the development under consideration and ensure that smaller scale development is determined under delegated power, thereby allowing elected members to focus on strategic and complex developments.	Planning Service	High	Short	Service Managers
Attribute 4: Elected member training to bring forward a more structured and consistent approach and greater awareness of current wider development, news and innovation within the Scottish planning sector. We will seek to ensure that training is aligned with forthcoming Scottish Government guidance and legislation in respect of statutory councillor training and to support elected members in decision-making and knowledge gathering.	Planning Service, Elected members and Scottish Government	Medium	Short to Medium	Chief Planning Officer/ Development Management staff/Development Planning and possible external resource
Attribute 5: Corporate Management Team workshops to show links between planning and other departments on e.g. developer contributions, place and wellbeing outcomes. We will also involve external stakeholders in sharing good practice.	Planning Service Corporate Management Team	Medium	Short	Service Managers and Development Planning





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	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
Attribute 6/7: Introduce new GIS system and layers, which will contribute to a spatial evidence base for LDP processes and planning decision-making, and corporate spatial data sharing and management. Consider linkages of various systems with spatial data to streamline processes – e.g. Uniform and GIS.	Corporate	High	Medium	Planning Service, IT and other services. External resources



Attribute 7: Explore further opportunities to use digital solutions to increase automation and improve workflow and provide seamless communication with other systems where relevant – e.g. Implement electronic Enforcement forms and Mailbox Planning Service High Short Planning Staff and IT to focus delivery and reduce timescales and handling.	Planning Service	High	Short	Planning staff and IT
Attribute 7: Review Planning and Enforcement web presence to provide a better and more customer friendly experience which is quality, accurate and accessible.	Planning Service	High	Short (review) Medium (implementation)	Planning Enforcement and support staff
Attribute 8: Update Enforcement Charter to ensure it reflects the Council's current approach to the use of enforcement controls and the monitoring of development.	Planning Service	Medium	Medium	Service managers/ Enforcement Officers
Attribute 8: Introducing new measures to improve local development performance figures, including review of front and back end of planning application processes and benchmark with other Planning Authorities.	Planning Service	Medium	Medium	Development Management and support staff





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.	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
Attribute 9: Review our chargeable pre application service and the use of Processing Agreements. We will seek to work across Council departments and with external and internal consultees to deliver an improved and streamlined service that provides applicants with a better and more complete service that is more interactive and can deliver greater	Planning Service	Medium	Medium	Service Managers/ Team Leaders



certainty earlier in the process to enable them to incorporate feedback prior to submission of their application. This will assist in improving the quality of development and decision making.				
Attribute 9: Hold a meeting with agents for householder and local development in terms of validation and registration of applications and customer service.	Planning Service	Medium	Medium	Service Managers/ Team Leaders
Attribute 10: Promote the use of Engagement HQ for consultation with communities and other service departments and external stakeholders.	Planning Service	Low	Short	All planning staff
Attribute 10: Engage with communities on Local Place Plans and Community Action Plans and how these will interface with LDP3. Pilot with a community to develop different approaches to consultation moving away from traditional drop-in events to ensure communities are listen to and actions are publicised.	Development Planning	High	Long	Development Planning Team





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	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 11: Build on relationships with NHS to build better links to health and wellbeing outcomes through LDP3 and other service departments and link to Attribute 5.	Planning Service/ NHSAA and Improvement Service	High	Medium	Planning staff



<p>Attribute 12: Create template for legal agreements for most common heads of terms to reduce timescales for completion. Consider and integrate with work being undertaken by HoPS on template legal agreements.</p> <p>Place these documents on our website. Encourage twin tracking of legal agreement drafting during planning application assessment to minimise time post recommendation and work closely with Legal Colleagues.</p>	<p>Planning Service/ Legal Services and HoPS</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Planning and legal staff with potential to draw on work being undertaken by HoPS</p>
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