



NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

North Lanarkshire 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: Review staff structure to ensure we can continue to meet our statutory duty and corporate priorities.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 1: Seek feedback directly from staff via our fortnightly staff workshops, and where appropriate topic focused workshops to ensure frontline staff continue to have the opportunity to shape working	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	



practice, process, highlight areas for improvement and lead the delivery of change.				
Attribute 2: Introduce structured team meetings, regular case officer 1-1s and peer review on stagnant cases to establish solutions that could enable decision making.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 2: Continue with our workforce planning by continuing to create opportunities for staff development and progression that will strengthen the team and prepare for future challenges, including the introduction of a graduate trainee planning post.	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
Attribute 2: Strengthen PRD process by setting deadlines that will ensure all staff and managers undertake PRD meetings in time to allow annual training to be scheduled.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Short	
Attribute 2: Create opportunity for skill sharing across Local Authorities by linking Continued Professional Development training and learning to increase opportunities for staff development.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	





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	3
5. This Planning Authority has effective leadership	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 3: Recruit a new management post and realign existing staff structure to resource a new 'Invest' team that will take a multidisciplinary and phased approach to providing preapplication planning, roads, environmental health, business support and council land ownership advice and support for key projects.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	



Attribute 3: Create planning officer working group to support the implementation of service improvement actions and the delivery of the National Planning Improvement Framework.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 3: Review and further develop out complaints system and process to enable better analysis of complaints.	Lorelei Gonella	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 4: Implement Elected Members training in accordance with new legislation.	Lorna Bowden	High	Medium	
Attribute 5: We will continue to look for opportunities to enhance our service delivery through sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with our partners and stakeholders.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	





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	3
7. The planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology	1
8. The planning authority has effective and efficient decision-making processes	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 <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: Work with partners peer and national groupings to identify best practice to achieve best value in the efficient sharing and use of evidence for development implementation of NLLDP2.	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
Attribute 7: We will continue to share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	



the implementation of digital solutions that lead to improvement, while horizon scanning on future advances on digital technology that can support the planning service.				
Attribute 8: Wel will share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around implementation of processes, digital solutions and methods of communication that lead to improvement.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	





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	4
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
Attribute 9: We will host an Agents Forum to allow us to have an open discussion around new legislation and policy, and of how that impacts planning applications in North Lanarkshire. We will ask developers to guide the topics to be covered in future forums.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	



Attribute 9: We will participate in the National Customer Survey and analyse the results to allow us to prepare an improvement action plan.	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
Attribute 10: Looking at feedback given through peer collaborative review, we will engage further with applicants, consultees and community organisations to develop an engagement strategy that will help us ensure we can share information, advice and feedback in a way that is tailored to suit customer and stakeholder needs and expectations.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	





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	4
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	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
Attribute 11: Assess the scope of current policies, projects and strategies, with place-based outcomes and outputs, and the associated place-based consultations supporting them with a view to identifying gaps that will guide us in carrying out focused place-based discussions or where required surveys with our communities.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	



Attribute 12: Review and test the conditions monitoring module and establish a process around use to better support the management of a risk assessment approach to discharging planning conditions.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 12: We will undertake a Planning Processing Agreement (PPA) process review specifically around the extension to PPA where dates are not fulfilled.	Moirra Dell	Medium	Short	
Attribute 12: We will undertake a process review around stalled sites and legacy cases to establish a methodology to progress cases.	Moirra Dell	Medium	Short	
Attribute 12: We will review out Section 75 Model agreements to ensure they are accessible and easy to use.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Short	

