

Learning Point: Supporting Planning Authorities to be Examination Ready

June 2026



Planning authorities across Scotland are currently taking forward new style Local Development Plans (LDPs), which will set out how places will change into the future, including where development should and shouldn't happen. This work is being undertaken through a new process that aims to result in new style plans that are to be more focused on place and delivery.

It is important that planning authorities are equipped to navigate the plan making process effectively and efficiently. A key part of this is about looking ahead to see what needs to be done now to make things work well in the future.

A vital part of the LDP adoption process is its examination. The examination provides an opportunity for independent consideration of any issues raised during consultation on the Proposed Plan that have not been resolved through modification. To prepare for this stage in process, a workshop was held on examination delivered by Allison Coard, Claire Milne and Nick Smith from the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA).

Support for the workshop was provided by the Improvement Service through the LDP Support Programme, a key element of the National Planning Hub. It involved eight authorities from across Scotland, each of whom have navigated their way through the LDP gate check. It is planned to hold similar sessions for other authorities as they progress through the LDP process.



The workshop provided a useful overview of the examination process, the role of the Reporter, and explained the use of Schedule 3s in summarising unresolved issues. The workshop included group tasks where participants were required to identify and group issues and to review and discuss examples of summarised representations, putting participants in the shoes of the Reporter.

Feedback on the day was positive, noting that the workshop provided a solid grounding on who needs to do what when, and how best to do that.

Some key takeaways included:

- **Plan ahead:** it can be easy to underestimate the number of tasks involved and the time it can take to do them.
- **Project management:** early consideration of the right tools to help with project management is essential.
- **Structure and clarity of Schedule 3:** group issues in a logical way, ensure the right detail is included so Reporters can clearly understand which sites are being referred to. At the same time, be confident in your professional judgement. Remove unnecessary detail and succinctly summarise the issues.
- **Engagement with DPEA:** early and ongoing engagement with DPEA is encouraged.

Please keep an eye out for announcements of future sessions on our [website](#) and within the LDP Support Network Teams group. In the meantime, you can view the workshop slides [here](#).

If you would like to find out more about the LDP Support Programme or to be added to the Teams group, please contact us at npi@improvementservice.org.uk.

About Learning Points

We publish learning points identified through our work on the LDP Support Programme. They aim to support the sharing of knowledge and build collaboration across the sector focusing on challenges as they are identified. Please email us at npi@improvementservice.org.uk if your authority has a good practice case study relevant to this learning point to share.

