

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

# Improvement Action Plan 2024

**East Lothian 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>Start monthly collaboration sessions for all Members of the Planning Service, and look to involve external stakeholders in giving some of the presentations.</b>	Amy Law	High	Short term	All planning staff, and other services/internal consultees as required.
<b>Chief Planner to hold a training session with Business Service about the Scottish planning system</b>	Keith Dingwall	High	Short term	Planning staff



and of the roles of the various teams within the  
Planning Service.





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
Consider implementing the ‘pre-validation service’ for planning applications.	Thelma Barson and Emma Taylor	Medium	Long term	Planning staff
Elected member training (including for specialist areas eg Battery Energy Storage)	Keith Dingwall	Medium	Short term	Planning staff





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	2
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 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 the use of new digital technology in LDP mapping.	Robin Edgar	High	Short term	Planning staff/ internal
The Policy and Projects Team will seek to use an online platform that would allow wider access to the	Robin Edgar	High	Short term	Planning staff



<b>data from the Evidence Report and the next stages of the LDP.</b>				
<b>Raise with HOPS and Scottish Government that circular 4/1998 (model Planning Conditions) should be revised and updated to take into account NPF4 requirements.</b>	Keith Dingwall	Medium	Short term	Planning staff
<b>To support the Council's Information Governance team in the preparation of an Information Strategy.</b>	Keith Dingwall	Medium	Short term	Planning staff/ internal





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.	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
Run a month-long customer and stakeholder survey to gauge satisfaction with the Planning Service.	Keith Dingwall	Medium	Short term	Planning staff
To conduct a horizon scanning of digital technologies that could support our engagement with stakeholders and local communities during the proposed LDP stage.	Robin Edgar	High	Short term	Planning staff



<b>Run an Annual Developers Forum.</b>	Keith Dingwall	Medium	Short term	Planning staff
<b>To issue a planning newsletter more frequently during the Proposed LDP stage.</b>	Robin Edgar	Medium	Short term	Planning staff







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
Explore using tools such as the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes for the Proposed LDP.	Robin Edgar	High	Short term	Planning staff
Explore possible funding mechanisms sufficient to employ a planner dealing with energy related proposals, possibly for a temporary 2-year period.	Keith Dingwall	High	Short term	Planning staff / internal

