

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2025

Aberdeen City 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
Action: Preparation of a workforce planning strategy including consideration of team reorganisation, skills audit, career progression pathways, succession planning, enhancement of service resilience, vacant post redesign. Outcome: Improved service capacity, resilience, and adaptability.	Chief Officer SPP	High	Short Term for preparation but medium term for delivery	All planning staff and corporate business support





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	3
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 <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
Action: Local Review Body monitoring and review including promote attendance of 5 members, careful consideration of all refusals by Team Leaders, refresh LRB-specific elected member planning training.	Development Management Manager	High	Short term	Planning Convenor Development Management Manager Senior Planner (LRB Advisor)



Outcome: To increase percentage decisions in accordance with recommendation.				
Action: Support interested staff to undertake training in leadership and management skills where the current management team feels it would benefit their professional development.	SPP Senior Management Team	Medium	Medium Term	Council's Organisational Development Teams
Outcome: To support good succession planning				
Action: Refresh planning and LRB training for elected members and cover emerging planning issues such as short term lets and battery energy storage.	Service Managers	Medium	Short term	All planning staff (as relevant to training to be provided)





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	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 <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
Action: Draft and implement guidance for planning case officers and template reports of handling. Outcome: Reduction in determination timescales.	Development Management Manager	Medium	Short term	Team Leaders (Major and Applications Teams) Planning case officers



<p>Action: Utilise Microsoft Power BI as an internal reporting tool.</p> <p>Outcome: Put in place a suite of relevant real time reports to maximise the potential for reporting and monitoring. This could also be linked into the Delivery Plan monitoring.</p>	Policy and Strategy Manager and Development Management Manager	High	Short term	LDP and DM planning staff and Corporate Services Data Insights Team
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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 <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
Action: Agents' forum meetings (full range of agents) to be arranged at least once a year. Outcome: To promote dialogue, learning and service improvement.	Development Management Manager	Medium	Short Term	DM Manager Team Leaders



Action: Reconfigure the planning webpages Outcome: Improved customer experience and ease of use - reducing burden on staff resource.	Customer Experience Team	High	Short Term	Working group comprising members of all planning teams
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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
Action: Building on the “health in all policies” approach taken in LDP3, consider how to incorporate local work on the social determinants of health and the Marmot City principles into the next LDP.	Policy & Strategy Manager	Medium	Medium	Local Development Plan Team NHS Grampian Public Health Scotland



Outcome: A strong Local Development Plan,
grounded in prevention

