

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2025

South 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	4
2. The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce	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 <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
Following the Service Redesign focus will be given to filling vacancies including external vacancies that arise.	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Short	Maintaining existing budget
Support staff in regular collaborative training	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As Staff levels increase, focus can move away from front line delivery to staff growth and training



Carry out Skills Audit and competency matrix of Staffing resource including actions to meet gaps	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As above
Provide a diagram plotting the leadership culture within the Service as a basis for discussion, amendment and then endorsement	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As above
Provide an example led diagram demonstrating processes to empower staff along with support provisions and then test with staff through a workshop	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As above





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
Support staff in regular structured collaborative training informed by a skills review.	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As Staff levels increase, focus can move away from front line delivery towards staff growth and training



Install a dynamic performance and resource monitoring system to track cases-to-hand relative to resource	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Short	As above
Re-establish Architect/Agents Forum	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Low	Medium	As above
Regular review working process	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Low	Medium	As above
Roll out Enterprise in Planning	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Medium	As above
Roll out systematic basis for regular monitoring of high risk planning conditions	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Medium	As above





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 <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
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	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	Owner	Importance	Timescale	Resources
What action will you take? What will the outcome be?		High Medium Low	Short term – 1 year Medium term – 3 years Long term – 3+ years	
Explore greater use of the GIS maps including input training for all Planning staff	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Long	Work with Colleagues to provide training



Explore greater use of the Uniform data base and Enterprise systems to improve efficiency	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Short	Work with Colleagues and IDOX
Provide standard guidance on Roads Technical requirements to reduce need for consultations	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Medium	Work with Colleagues in ARA to produce guidelines.



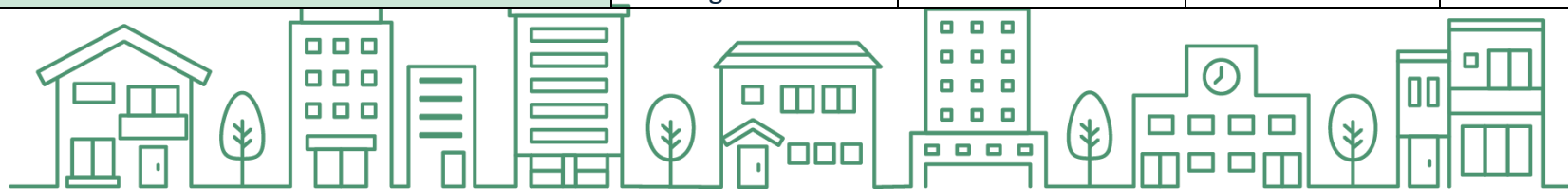


A high performing planning authority should ensure a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places. Engagement should be fair and inclusive, early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate and should include difficult to reach groups. The authority should engage with a wide range 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 <small>(1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)</small>
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 <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
Following the Service Redesign focus will be given to filling vacancies permanently and promoting succession planning.	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Short	Maintaining existing budget
Obtain appropriate staff to carry out additional engagement with Public	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Short	Finance to support additional roles



Regular Customer Questionnaires	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Medium	Short	Additional Staff
Preparation of an Engagement Strategy between the Planning Authority and its customers covering communication methods, meetings and Site visits	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	medium	As above
Review of Customer Charter	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	High	Medium	As above



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
Consideration will be given to expanding the Pre application process to all applications types with an aim of improving the quality of the developments	Service Lead Planning & Building Standards	Low	Long	Staff resource required
The Council to prepare an overarching framework demonstrating the relationship between Place Plans, Local Place Plans , Regeneration Strategy and other such location based documents to help the understanding of how these various elements interact. To be used by Communities and the Council	Assistant Director of Housing, Operations and Development	Low	Long	As above

