NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

Dumfries and Galloway 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	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 1: Continue with a recruitment programme to fill remaining vacancies of the new structure in conjunction with minimising the use of agency staff. Continue to Review how to deploy them most effectively.	Planning and Development Manager	High	Short term	Planning and Development Manager/HR/Scottish Government/DGC Strategic Leadership Team
Attribute 1: Creation of a project board for LDP3.	Team Leader (Development Planning)	High	Short term	LDP Team

Attribute 2: Continue with workforce planning to create opportunities for staff development to prepare for future challenges.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 2: Undertaken annual staff surveys to seek the ideas and challenges faced by staff.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader Systems and Performance
Attribute 2: Develop work experience and education opportunities with external partners such as architects, developers, universities, SoSE and Community Councils.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders/ External parties
Attribute 2: Undertake internal CPD events and opportunities for staff to meet as a wider team.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Team Leaders
Attribute 2: Continue to work with technical consultees to ensure timeous and constructive consultations responses. Review enhancement in mentoring and training of all staff.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Team Leaders/Consultees

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: As identified as an action in the DM Review, create a suite of Power Bi reports to monitor performance and workloads	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)	Medium	Long term	Team Leader Systems and Performance/ Systems and Statistics Technician

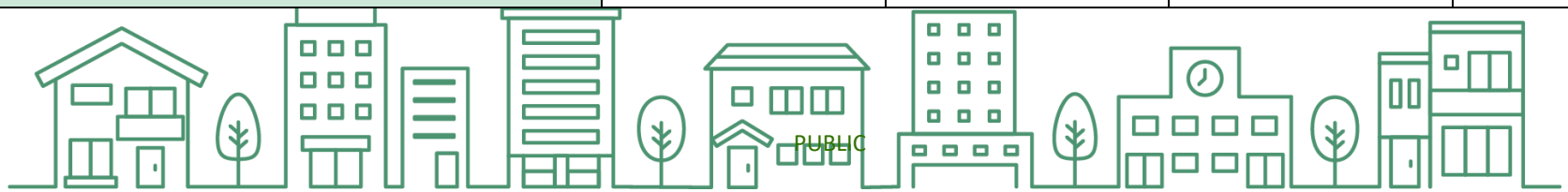
Attribute 3: Organise future DGC Design Awards.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader (DP)
Attribute 3: As identified as an action in the DM Review, create a SharePoint site to record planning complaints/comments which is accessible to all of the service	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long Term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader
Attribute 3: Review the working relationship between development management and development plan teams to assist in the preparation of LDP3 and Housing Land Audit.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Medium term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders/Case Officers
Attribute 3: Submit for planning awards where appropriate.	Planning and Development Manager	Low	Long term	All Team
Attribute 3: As identified as an action in the DM Review, continue to review and update customer guidance on the website	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 4: Review the need and frequency of Member training and workshops for those attending PAC and LRB	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 4: Creation of officer/member working groups for LDP3.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Short term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader (DP)
Attribute 5: As identified as an action in the DM Review. review how information is cascaded through the service.	Planning and Development Manager	High	Long Term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders

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	4
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 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 7: Continue to develop the use of digital technology to deliver the planning service, including the use of potential tools such as AI.	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)	High	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader System and Performance/ Improvement Service



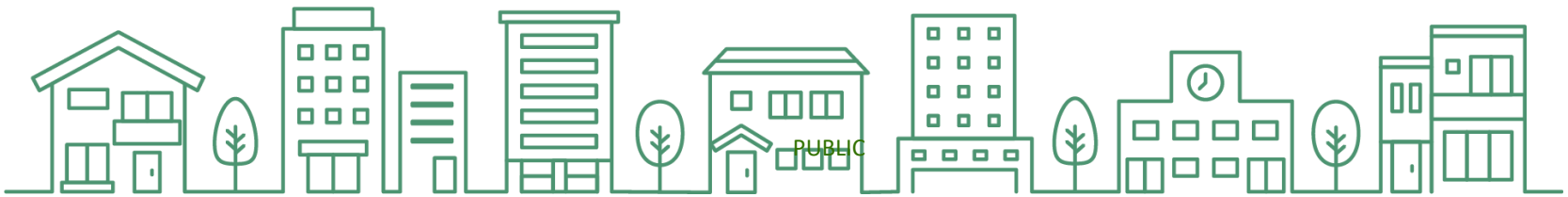
Attribute 7: Identify opportunities and new ways of working using GIS, to enable the planning service to be more efficient and effective.	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)	High	Long term	Team Leaders
Attribute 7: Work with colleagues within the Council's web team to deliver an updated website.	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)	High	Short term	Team Leaders/Web Team
Attribute 8: Undertake a review of the current pre application service in the light of ongoing Scottish Government national review.	Planning and Development Manager	High	Short term	Team Leader (Planning Applications), Architects/ Agents, Scottish Government
Attribute 8: Continue to monitor resourcing to achieve target timescales for adoption of LDP3.	Team Leader (Local Development Team)	High	Short term	LDP Team
Attribute 8: Continue to work on the proposed LDP3 in accordance with emerging legislation and guidance.	Team Leader (Local Development Team)	High	Medium term	LDP Team
Attribute 8: Continue to deliver the Action Plan following the Development Management Review.	Planning and Development Manager	High	Long term	All Development Management
Attribute 8: Continue to monitor enforcement capacity in response to increasing case numbers	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)

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.	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 9: Explore approaches to share information, gain feedback with stakeholders and build relationships – such as focus groups, agents forums, webinars.	Team Leader (Development Planning)	High	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 9: Hold engagement events in preparation of the Evidence Report.	Team Leader (Development Planning)	High	Short term	LDP Team



Attribute 9: Explore and deliver the best methods for involving elected members, community groups, the public and those with protected characteristics in the development of LDP3.	Team Leader (Development Planning)	High	Long term	LDP Team
Attribute 9: Explore how to make information about the planning service more easily available to local communities eg sharing what exists, using online/social media, user friendly language	Planning and Development Manager	High	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders/ Communication Team
Attribute 9: Carry out an annual customer survey each year.	Team Leader (Systems and Performance)	High	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader Systems and Performance
Attribute 9: Build on existing tools and develop new ways to improve customer service, utilising digital technology where possible.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leader
Attribute 9: Continue to carry out annual Agents Forums.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 10: Continue to work together with communities to develop and deliver Local Place Plans	Team Leader (Development Planning)	Medium	Long term	LDP Team

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	3
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	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 12: Review the processes for recording Section 75 agreements internally.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 12: Engage and support communities on Local Place Plans and	Team Leader (Development Planning)	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development

Borderlands Place Plans and how they interface with LDP3.				Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 12: Review the effectiveness of planning conditions, taking account of ongoing national work.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Short term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders
Attribute 12: Review mechanisms for increasing the use of processing agreement.	Planning and Development Manager	Medium	Long term	Planning and Development Manager/Team Leaders