



Cairngorms
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

is.
improvement service

NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

Improvement Action Plan 2024

Cairngorms National Park Authority





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 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
Work with the human resources team in their update of the current Workforce Management Strategy to consider and review the specific challenges around recruitment to the planning service, and develop further measures to address this within the context of current recruitment constraints.	<i>Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer in conjunction with Human Resources team</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Staff time</i>



Monitor and review the effectiveness of the Graduate Planner posts as part of the 'grow your own' approach to addressing planning recruitment challenges.	Development Management and Forward Planning Managers	Medium	Medium	Staff time
Carry out a skills audit within the planning team, relative to the new expectations and requirements in NPF4, to identify gaps in knowledge and inform specific training programmes, and to identify any areas where additional external support may be required.	Development Management and Forward Planning Managers	High	Short	Staff time





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	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
Undertake an annual review of projects to identify potential candidate submissions for relevant award schemes to achieve wider recognition of the high quality work undertaken by the planning service.	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer, Development Management and	Medium	Ongoing	Staff time



	Forward Planning Managers			
Continue to plan and deliver an ongoing programme of member training, in agreement with the Convener and Deputy Convener of the Planning Committee.	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer, Convener and Deputy Convener of Planning Committee	High	Ongoing	Staff and member time





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	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 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
Working in conjunction with colleagues at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority, complete the migration of our IDOX system to the cloud to ensure consistency and resilience of service provision.	Development Management Manager, Planning Systems Officer	High	Short term	Staff time



Liaise with Scottish Government to explore whether the e-development portal could be adapted to accept additional supporting information post call-in.	Development Management Manager, Scottish Government	Medium	Medium	Staff time, Scottish Government resource support
Implement a project to ensure effective monitoring of compliance with planning permissions for major developments in line with Section 44 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.	Development Management Manager, Enforcement Officer	High	Short term	Staff time





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	3
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
Reconvene the Developers Forum, in an updated format, to provide a more effective mechanism for regular engagement with development industry representatives to identify and address common issues and to target further service improvements.	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer	Medium	Short term and then ongoing	Staff time



Reconvene the Planning Representatives Networks, in an updated format, to provide a more effective mechanism for regular engagement with community council representatives to identify and address common issues and target further service improvements, and explore other methods for increasing planning knowledge and engagement at the local community level.	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer, Development Management and Forward Planning Managers	Medium	Short term and then ongoing	Staff time
Reconvene regular planning protocol meetings with relevant local authority colleagues, in an updated format, to identify and address common issues and to target further service improvements.	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer	Medium	Short term and then ongoing	Staff time
Overhaul the planning web pages as part of a wider redevelopment of the Park Authority's website to ensure greater use of accessible language, clearer advice and guidance, and enhanced visibility of planning content.	Development Management and Forward Planning Managers	High	Medium term	Staff time





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
Carry out a review of s75 processes and procedures – to include greater alignment with local authority developer obligations teams and relevant services, introduction of clearer ‘heads of terms’ documentation in conjunction with local authority legal teams to streamline s75 drafting process, and	Head of Planning & Chief Planning Officer and Development	High	Short – medium term	Staff time



implement processes for enhanced monitoring of s75 agreements post approval.	Management Manager			
Develop and implement standard planning conditions to ensure consistency where possible across all decisions, streamline decision making, and to enable easier / more effective monitoring and enforcement.	Senior Planning Officer	High	Short term	Staff time

