

### NATIONAL PLANNING IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

2023 - 2024



LIVE LEARN WORK INVEST VISIT



### Contents

	Page
Introduction	04
Context	05
Self Assessment:	
People	06
Culture	18
• Tools	26
• Engage	34
Place	39
Good Practice:	
Attribute 2: Workforce Strategy	45
Attribute 7: Making the best use of digital and technology	47
Attribute 8: Decision making process	49
Appendix 1 - Improvement Action Plan	51





### Introduction

### Planning plays a vital role that in delivering key parts of The Plan for North Lanarkshire.

The service sits under the remit of the Chief Officer (Place) along with the Infrastructure and Transportation, Enterprise, City Deal, New Supply and Growth teams.

The Planning and Place service focuses on the council's statutory functions, while the City Deal and Growth teams, with planners at the heart of their operations, are focused on delivering physical projects across North Lanarkshire. Within Planning and Place, focusing on the policy and development management functions enables the team to concentrate on using our resources to best effect while ensuring our processes deliver efficient and effective services to our customers.

The team's ongoing drive to refine and further improve has led to planners now being able to concentrate on ensuring development being carried out across North Lanarkshire is making a positive contribution to our communities. We have a long-established history of refining, and building on, our service's successes. A key element of benchmarking our progress has been through our participation in the annual non-statutory Planning Performance Framework programme, where we carried out a thorough critical evaluation of our work.

This report sets out the results of the new self-assessment process being piloted as part of the National Planning Improvement Framework. The new National Planning Improvement Framework was developed by the Improvement Service in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders with interests in planning and will replace our Planning Performance Framework.

As one of 10 planning authorities taking part in the first pilot to test this new framework, we welcome the opportunity to work with our peer partners, Fife Council, and the wider team, to explore what works effectively and to learn and

feedback on what could be improved, and to learn from and share good practice nationally.

Recognising our areas of good practice and evaluating where we feel we can further develop will help us to drive further improvements in our service as we focus on being a high-performing planning authority.

Our customers play a key role in identifying areas where we can further improve. Their feedback through the framework is central to helping us produce actions to ensure our service is responsive, flexible and making a positive impact on North Lanarkshire's regeneration.

I would particularly like to thank those who participated in our peer review meeting to examine our proposed actions and to guide where we could develop further. Their input has helped us define our actions and has influenced our priorities.

My thanks also go to the team, particularly the key individuals that drove this new process, for their efforts in undertaking this process.

I look forward to sharing our progress in future reports.

### Lorna Bowden Planning and Place Manager North Lanarkshire Council





### Context

### The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced new statutory reporting for planning authorities.

This mandatory requirement means that we must prepare a report annually that will assess our performance and identify actions for improvement. This report and the associated improvement action plan will be published and submitted to Ministers.

The new National Planning Improvement Framework was developed with stakeholders from a range of perspectives and interests in planning. It focusses around five themes that have been identified as being key to a high performing planning authority. Within these five themes there are 12 attributes. These are:

#### **Theme: People**

- 1. Has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity.
- 2. Has a valued and supported workforce.

#### **Theme: Culture**

- 3. Has embedded continuous improvement.
- 4. Has sound governance.
- 5. Has effective leadership.

#### **Theme: Tools**

- 6. Has robust policy and evidence base.
- 7. Makes best use of digital technology.
- 8. Has effective decision-making processes.

#### Theme: Engage

- 9. Has good customer care.
- 10. Has effective engagement & collaboration with stakeholders and communities.

#### **Theme: Place**

- 11. Supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places.
- 12. Supports the delivery of consented development.

The matrix below has been provided by the Improvement Service to be applied when determining the score we have given to each attribute.

Where we have scored 1 or 2, we have provided examples of good practice.

1	Making excellent progress	Consolidate Share learning with others
2	Making good progress	Build upon Increase ambition in targets Share learning with others
3	Making fair progress	Develop Increase ambition in targets Review and improve implementation
4	Making limited progress	Review Review ambition Review approach taken Inform NPI Learn from others
5	No progress	Prioritise Prioritise fundamental review and revisit approach taken. Engage with NPI Learn from others



# This planning authority has sufficient resources and skills to maximise productivity

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have the sufficient level of staff to carry out all activities within the required timeframes?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current budget?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to carry out all activities within the required timeframes with its current income?
- Does the planning authority received responses from consultees within the prescribed timescale when assessing planning applications?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to access the appropriate advice, expertise, evidence and data it requires?

### Theme: People



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.







### Staffing and Structure

Our Planning and Place team sits within Place in the Enterprise and Communities service cluster. The Place service consists of Planning and Place, Infrastructure and Transportation, Enterprise, City Deal, New Supply and Growth teams.

In addition to delivering our core statutory functions within Planning and Place, planning officer posts have been created within both Growth and City Deal. This service structure has been aligned to support and enable the delivery of growth and has a central role in the delivery of the Programme of Work in North Lanarkshire.

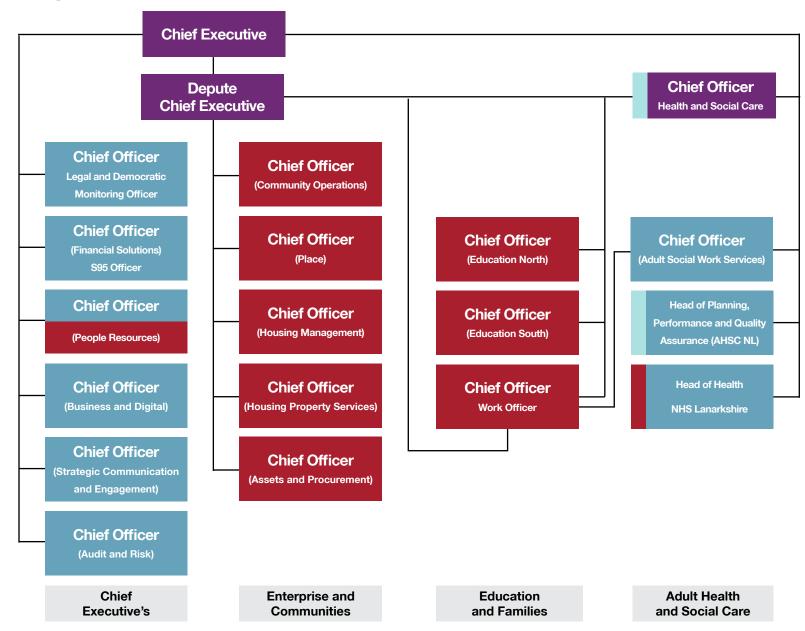
Within the council, the Place service and particularly Planning and Place is recognised as being pivotal in maximising the potential of North Lanarkshire as a place.

This wider service cluster enables us to combine skills and resources to address challenges through integrated solutions, making our areas attractive business locations, improving employment opportunities, encouraging strong sustainable communities, and enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment.





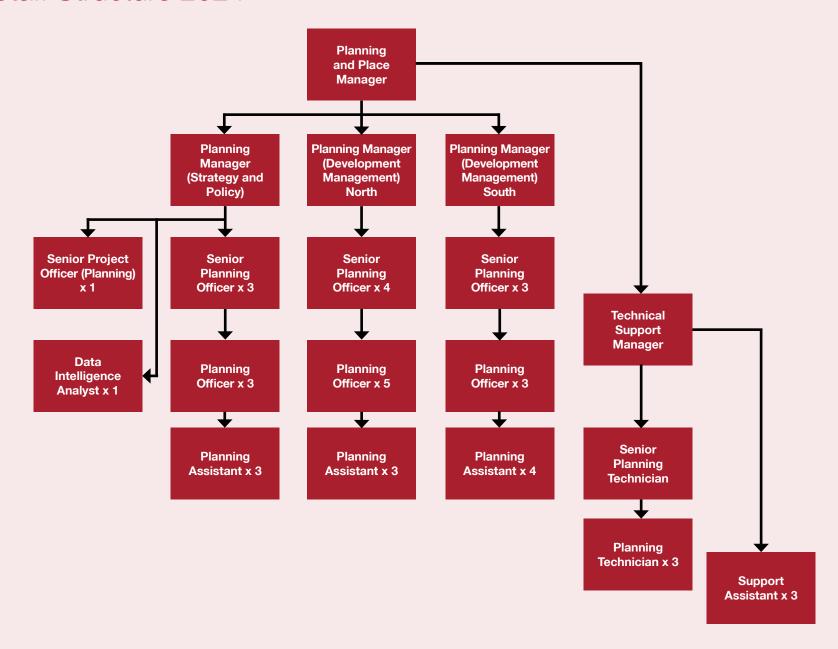
### Organisational Structure 2024







### Staff Structure 2024





#### National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/2024

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is a membership organisation and the professional body representing planners.

Our staff age profile and professional membership status are recorded as follows:

TIER 1

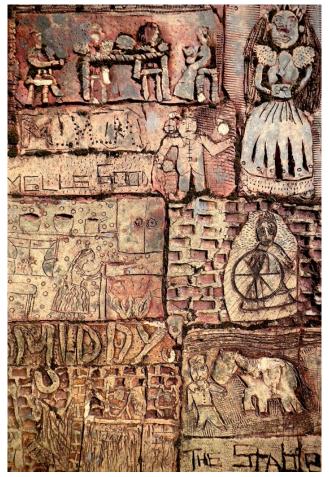
		Chief Executive	Director	Head of Service	Manager
	Head of Planning Service			1	3
	Staff Age Profile	Headcount			
	Under 30	2			
t	30-39	3			
	40-49	14			
	50 and over	17			
	RTPI Chartered Staff				
min di	Chartered staff	23			
			And the same of the same		
	Continue and the same of the s			and the last	
					(i) 67 iv.
Ť.					
M	0,0		Soliton O		
	The state of the s		_ Joillon O		
	10		学人为发		
				<b>可是是为了</b>	The state of the s

TIER 2

TIER 3

TIER 4







### Carrying out activities on time and budget

With professional planners employed within Planning and Place, Growth and City Deal teams, there is resilience built in at service level to ensure the Place service can continue to meet its statutory planning obligations and also deliver on council priorities.

As we monitor demands on our service, we are currently reviewing our staff structure to ensure we can continue to meet both our statutory duty and our corporate priorities. This restructure will include the introduction of a dedicated multi-disciplinary 'Invest' team that will support development and investment in North Lanarkshire.

Within our strategy and policy team we are addressing the risks of single point of failure by capturing processes, sharing specialisms, and developing and creating opportunities for all staff to upskill as we aim to ensure robust succession planning across the team.

For planning applications and enforcement, performance management allows us to identify skill gaps and address these to ensure all staff are equipped to carry out their role within the development management teams. The broad skill base of the team means that there isn't any single point of failure and that all team members can progress applications appropriate to their experience and qualifications. Our performance time scales demonstrate the success of this approach.

For business development, the risk of single point of failure specifically around IT system support is being addressed through training, mentoring and development with technicians now upskilled to administer the Uniform system, PowerBI dashboards, performance reporting and are further developing their ArcGIS skills. We have set up a National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) focus group to take forward the statutory NPIF and improvement actions to increase resilience, share knowledge and to upskill planning staff in this area of work.

We currently have unfilled posts including at management level and officer level. Recognising the challenges and changing needs of the service the posts have been realigned with a view to ensuring posts are filled and the needs of the service met.





### Income

With no capital budget to report, the total Planning and Place income from application fees for the past three reporting years is as follows:

• 2023-24: £1,681,639

• 2022-23: £1,659,975

• 2021-22: £1,633,749

Our workload has broadly remained the same between 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Income for recently introduced discretionary charges (included in our total income figures) for 2023-24 is  $\mathfrak{L}_{33,375}$ .



### Consultee response times

Having developed PowerBI dashboards to support performance management and workflow management, we can readily evidence consultee response rates and are taking steps to encourage responses within statutory timeframes.

For the reporting year 2023-24, 79.6% of all consultations are responded to within prescribed timescales.

The introduction of Idox Consultee Access during 2023-24 has provided an efficient and easy to use process for consultee bodies to submit comments on specific applications.

We hope that this solution will help improve our consultee rate of response within statutory prescribed timescales.





### Accessing advice, expertise, evidence and data

Access to data is key to informing the decision-making process around all elements of our business, including meeting our corporate objectives, statutory timescales, performance reporting and Local Development Plan.

Having created a specific Data Analyst within the Planning team, we have a dedicated resource with a corporate view of data and information to access and manage our data sets, interrogate data to provide evidence-based reporting and to support the cross referencing all council and partner data provided through existing strategies and North Lanarkshire's Programme of Work.

Data compatibility between both other council services and external partners does exist and is considered/mitigated through analysis.





### Summary

We consider that the NLC planning service is making fair progress with regard to the resources and skills needed to maximise productivity.

The staff structure within Planning and Place and the wider Place team support this ensuring income is maximised, and timeframes delivered on.

We are monitoring the time taken for consultees to respond and are looking to embed our solutions to support consultees in responding.

Within our staff structure we have a specific Data Analyst post to ensure we can develop evidencebased reporting.



# The planning authority has a valued and supported workforce

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have a workforce planning strategy in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to support staff development and upskilling and send staff on relevant courses?
- Does the planning authority have a deliverable commitment to support staff health and wellbeing?



### Workforce strategy

One of the council's five key priorities is to improve North Lanarkshire's resource base, and this includes the commitment to 'Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition'.

Within planning it is vital we effectively use our training budget to build our future workforce to enable us to support the councils' ambitious plans for growth and prosperity for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

Working with the council's Talent and Organisational Development Team on their 'Building a workforce for the future' programme, one step taken to try to address workforce planning was to provide Planning Technicians with the opportunity to study Spatial Planning at University of Glasgow. Leading to a Post Graduate Certificate, the course would enable the Technicians to further develop their planning skills and experience and would also mean they could gain the qualification necessary to apply for Planning Assistant posts.

We are delighted to have achieved the best possible outcome as two Planning Technicians have both now applied for and successfully been appointed in the role of Planning Assistant within our team. We are proud of their talent, experience and dedication and we are sure they will continue to be an asset to the council as they progress in their new planning careers and further develop in their new role.

For our wider technical support team, we have focused on training and upskilling our planning technicians to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop further in their role. This had also enabled more experienced staff to undertake personal development as they mentor and cascade their knowledge and skills.

Complimenting this strand of our workforce strategy, we have also sought to increase the resilience of our team through providing a route to career progression for staff who achieve chartered status with the Royal Town Planners Institute (RTPI) through the 'Planning Assistant/Planning Officer (Career Grade)' post.





Our previous staff structure restricted progression for assistant planners if there wasn't a vacant post at officer grade meaning staff needed to leave North Lanarkshire Council to progress their careers. Recognising the need to retain staff as they develop in their careers, we created the opportunity for career development within the team through a new Planning Assistant/Planning Officer post. This new post would enable planning assistants who achieve chartered status with the RTPI to progress to planning officer grade within North Lanarkshire Council allowing us to retain the talent we have invested in.

By providing a team structure that supports the development of staff, and by actively mentoring, encouraging and providing opportunities for learning and development, to date we have supported four young planners to achieve their chartered status and progress in their careers from assistant to officer grade.

Looking to build on these workforce planning successes, alongside the council's Chief Officer (People and Organisational Development), the Planning and Place Manager has collaborated to support a proposed new undergraduate planning degree being developed by University of West of Scotland (UWS).

It is anticipated that when introduced in September 2025, this planning career focused course will enable students to put theory into practice with hands-on learning and practical experience that will fully prepare them for a future career in planning.

We have committed to supporting one of our technicians through the course next year to enable career progression, personal development and to further grow our workforce.

### Staff Development

To ensure all staff have the appropriate skillset to meet the challenges we face, a robust Performance Review and Development (PRD) process is key to our success.

It engages employees and can motivate and support them in reaching their potential. It focuses on personal objectives and identifies any learning and development which will help achieve those objectives.

Learning opportunities cascading from the PRD process have included training on the use of new systems and processes and have had a demonstrable positive impact on our performance.

Our 'grow our own' approach to staff development and succession planning continues with the North Lanarkshire Council Learning Academy, further supporting employee and leadership development for all staff looking to achieve their full leadership potential. Leadership development opportunities include building resilience and leading complex change to managing performance, project management, supporting attendance and strategic policy.

With a national shortage of local authority planning officers due to the aging workforce leaving and fewer planners entering the system, and the competition from the private sector for qualified planning staff (source: National data compiled by RTPI), we have taken innovative steps in recruiting and training non-planning staff with specialist skills.

Strengthening the skillset and increasing resilience of the team through recruitment, we have taken an innovative approach to workforce planning. By identifying the different skills that can contribute to the overall planning process, the introduction of two new non-planner roles, a Senior Project Officer and a Data Analyst, have been created to specifically support North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 programme planning, data management and analysis, and performance reporting. These roles have been key to maximising the potential within the planning team by allowing all our staffing resources to be deployed effectively.

Welcoming graduate student placements within our planning team has added mutual value. As well as creating a pathway for students to gain practical experience in planning, these placements allow us to enrich our teams with a fresh perspective and new learning.

In addition to supporting staff through workforce planning, our staff development policies add value by ensuring we have the skills to meet our goals. Mandatory training on a broad range of topics including health and safety, personal safety training, incident reporting, risk, data protection, code of conduct and public sector equality duty ensure that best practice is embedded in our day to day activities, our processes and our ways of working.

Our service specific risk assessments and staff guidance also signposts all relevant training to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, including incident reporting.





### Staff Health and Wellbeing

To ensure all staff have the appropriate skillset to meet the challenges we face, a robust Performance Review and Development (PRD) process is key to our success.

Our online resources 'MyNL' provides an easy to access hub for all council procedures and guides, including our refreshed hybrid working scheme, while our 'Work Well NL' online resource provides information on a wealth of wellbeing and support

topics and benefits that are available to North Lanarkshire Council employees.

Corporate initiatives raising awareness of specific wellbeing topics such as mental health, money matters, stress, menopause, and getting active under the headings Think Well, Financially Well, Shop Well, Move Well, and Socially Well, via email have been well received and serve to raise the profile of the resources available to our workforce.

NLC is also proud to achieve Disability Confident Leader status, demonstrating that we lead the way for people with disabilities.

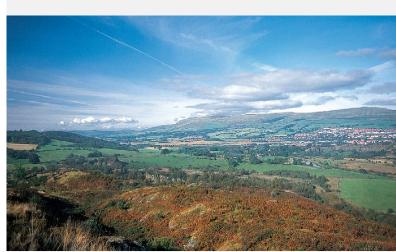


### Summary

We are making good progress with our workforce strategy and can demonstrate the success of our approach in recruiting, developing and retaining staff.

We have a training budget and carry out a Performance Review and Development process that supports staff development.

Health and wellbeing is cascaded corporately and all staff have online access to procedures, guidance, health and wellbeing resources





#### **Improvement Action Plan (People theme)**

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
<b>Attribute 1:</b> Review staff structure to ensure we can continue to meet our statutory duty and corporate priorities.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
<b>Attribute 1:</b> Seek feedback directly from staff via our fortnightly staff workshops, and where appropriate topic focused workshops to ensure frontline staff continue to have the opportunity to shape working practice, process, highlight areas for improvement and lead the delivery of change.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 2: Introduce structured team meetings, regular case officer 1-1s and peer review on stagnant cases to establish solutions that could enable decision making.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 2: Continue with our workforce planning by continuing to create opportunities for staff development and progression that will strengthen the team and prepare for future challenges, including	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
the introduction of a graduate trainee planning post.  Attribute 2: Strengthen PRD process by setting deadlines that will ensure all staff / managers undertake	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Short	
PRD meetings in time to allow annual training to be scheduled.				
<b>Attribute 2:</b> Create opportunity for skill sharing across Local Authorities by linking Continued Professional Development training and learning to increase opportunities for staff development.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	



# This planning authority has embedded continuous improvement

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority undertaken an annual assessment of its performance and acted upon areas previously identified as in need of improvement?
- Has the planning authority achieved recognition at relevant awards or through performance accreditation frameworks?
- Has the planning authority engaged in peer review, good practice exchange or improvement activities?
- Has the planning authority addressed any complaints upheld by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and have evidence of this and that it has learned from valid cases?

### Theme: Culture



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.

### Annual assessment of performance

Continuous improvement is embedded in our culture and is critical in ensuring our success as we seek to deliver a high-quality service. Quarterly and annual review of our performance and improvement action plan ensure we continue to monitor and track how we are progressing.

Our improvement measures set out in previous year's Planning Performance Framework reports have delivered progress and benefits that are now being realised.

Our improvement actions completed and underway include:

#### **Review:**

 Action: Reviewing our staff structure and processes in relation to the North Lanarkshire Programme of Work for Transforming Places and Invest in NL to ensure we can meet future challenges and effectively support delivery of investment to meet our economic regeneration priorities.

Outcome: Through this action we have identified the need to restructure and to realign a development management manager post to lead a multidisciplinary Invest in North Lanarkshire team. The objective of the team will be to work closely at an early stage with businesses and their agents to improve the quality of proposals for development of projects that accord with Local Development Plan zoning. The aim will be to guide good quality development proposals that will help us process planning applications, roads construction consents and building warrants more effectively.

 Action: Reviewing our approach to dealing with Planning enforcement complaints, including opportunities for more effective collaboration with other council services.

**Outcome:** Through this action we have identified the need for a dedicated enforcement team. This team will support the planning enforcement process and condition monitoring and link to other services to ensure a council focussed approach to enforcement matters.

 Action: Identify metrics and geographies for the definition of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.



**Outcome:** Work has started to establish a baseline and metrics and geographies will be defined for local living over the next reporting year.

 Action: Establish through peer review alternative systems and processes available to streamline and improve the process for dealing with Section 69 and Section 75s.

**Outcome:** Following review, a standard legal agreement form is being finalised that will help provide efficiency to the legal agreement process. In addition, through peer review with Fife Council we have explored the opportunity to use the existing Uniform system to allow us to deal with Section 69 and 75 moving forward. The development of this system will form next steps in developing an improved process.

• **Action:** Reviewed NPF4 to identify the requirement for additional supplementary guidance.

**Outcome:** Following review of NPF4, we have prepared additional planning guidance on noise, affordable housing, the Antonine Wall and we have progressed planning guidance on education contributions and expect this to be finalised following consultation in the coming months.

#### **Develop:**

 Action: Develop a comprehensive suite of data and define data governance that will support development of North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2.

**Outcome:** Our first batch of Evidence Report topic papers are now out to consultation as we work on collating data for our Evidence Report. This survey

work on data is programmed to be complete by October 2024, with the Evidence Report programmed for submission to Scottish Ministers by April 2025.

Action: Draft Participation and Engagement
 Strategy for North Lanarkshire Local Development
 Plan 2 (NLLDP2) including initial programme for key stakeholder discussion on NLLDP2.

**Outcome:** We have now published our Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement for NLLDP2.

#### Implement:

 Action: Planning application decision making process for committee applications to achieve consistency in all areas of development management application approval.

**Outcome:** Following feedback from managers and case officers who had the opportunity to reflect on the impact this change would have on the overall development management process, we adapted





our priorities and have focussed our resources in other areas of improvement. This specific area of decision making is considered lower priority in terms of overall benefit delivered.

 Action: Enhance our current IT workflow system to include new pre-application enquiries to achieve consistency in the pre-application process.

**Outcome:** We have updated our IT workflow system to ensure all pre-applications now follow defined steps in a workflow process. This ensures consistency of approach that leads to efficiency.

 Action: Further development of our IT workflow system to automate the exchange of information within the team for the new appeals process.

**Outcome:** Following feedback from managers and case officers who had the opportunity to reflect on the impact this change would have on the overall appeals process, we adapted our priorities and have focussed our resources in other areas of improvement. This specific area of decision making is considered lower priority in terms of overall benefit delivered.



### Awards and Recognition Peer review and

With a focus on recognition, Coatbridge's Carnegie Library has been shortlisted for the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2018.

The former library in Coatbridge, which was designed by Alexander Cullen, built in 1905 and financed by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, is situated in the historic core, central to Monkland Canal.

This prominent red sandstone 'Beaux Arts' style building makes an important contribution to the townscape and unique character of the area. However, it had been vacant since 2010 and it was important that the future of the building could be secured.

The council and Clyde Valley Housing Association (CVHA) worked together to create an exciting and viable redevelopment scheme. And, with funding help from Historic Environment Scotland, CVHA brought the vacant property back into use with the development of 12 affordable, modern flats with outdoor amenities.

Careful consideration was given to the overall design proposal and the sympathetic design resulted in securing the future of a significant and important piece of North Lanarkshire's build heritage for the future.

### Peer review and knowledge sharing

Throughout the year we have continued to participate in several partnership and peer groups. Through partnership working both across the council and with external partners, peer review, benchmarking and sharing best practice, a forum is created for sharing knowledge, comparing outcomes and discussing future direction.

Peer review has influenced and shaped our service improvements in various ways. Over the past year we have worked closely and shared knowledge on our approach to our Open Space Strategy and Evidence report via Heads of Planning Scotland and the Knowledge Hub. Working closely with Greenspace Scotland and Clyde Valley Green Network, the collaborative approach to develop our quality assessment has enhanced the quality of our Open Space audit and has led to us being able to gather relevant, good quality data on open space in North Lanarkshire.

The quality assessment document has been shared with West Dunbartonshire Council who have taken a very similar approach based on our quality assessment.

We have worked closely to strengthen links with South Lanarkshire Council and Glasgow City Council as we share the detail of our Idox system development and approach to development management processes that have led to efficiencies in our planning application processing timescales.

Working closely with South Lanarkshire Council on engagement with the Gypsy / Traveller community, we have developed a network that will allow for more effective engagement in future as we develop our North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2. We are also planning a joint Lanarkshire schools conference with North and South Lanarkshire children and young people being represented.

Building further on our strengths, we have worked closely with Stirling Council to share knowledge and skills to develop further our use of IT and knowledge around data management. Having representation on the Digital Office Data Task Force, this spread of knowledge reaches further.



National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/2024

### Complaints

Continuing our focus on continuous improvement, our customers views and experiences are important to us.

Our 'Listening to you' complaints procedure has been refined over several iterations and provides an easy to use process for customers to give us feedback on our service delivery.

For the reporting year 2023-24, four complaints were received by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman relating to the Planning Service.

These complaints weren't investigated and were not upheld indicating that we did what we said we would in these cases.



### Summary

We continually assess our performance and are making fair progress with our embedded continuous improvement.

We continue to monitor our improvement action plan and our completed and underway actions demonstrate this progress.



Recognition is offered internally, and the Carnegie Library in Coatbridge was shortlisted for Scottish Award for Quality in Planning 2018.

We continue to share our practice and have learned from others as we focus on our improvement activities.

Complaints also give us an opportunity to gain valuable insight into how we are doing and can help guide improvement. Of the four complaints referred to the Scottish Public Ombudsman Service, none were upheld.



### The planning authority has sound governance

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an effective scheme of delegation in place?
- Have all councillors who exercise a planning function undergone statutory training and is there is evidence of ongoing training for members?
- Have more than x % of officer recommendations have been overturned by councillors at committee or Local Review Body.

### Scheme of delegation

North Lanarkshire Council has an effective **scheme of delegation** approved by Scottish Government.

In addition, the councils wider Scheme of Delegation further supports staff in carrying out their operational duties, obligations and responsibilities.

Our Scheme of Delegation is reviewed regularly with the council Scheme of Delegation last updated during October 2023 to ensure it continues to allow us to make decisions efficiently and effectively.

Last year 97.1% of applications were decided under the Scheme of Delegation.

#### Elected members training

Mandatory training for Elected Members was included in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 as part of a wider package of measures to improve the performance of the planning system as a whole. While the Scottish Government consider responses to a consultation on mandatory training, to enable more informed decision making, our ongoing Elected Members training has continued around our service delivery and on topics such as changes brought about by the new Planning Act, NPF4 and new Local Development Plan guidance.

One to one training has taken place with the new members of the Planning Committee. This training is tailored to each individual and helps guide them through the roles, responsibilities and processes around the Planning Committee.

Training on our new Local Review Body (LRB) process was designed to support improved consistency in terms of information provided to Elected Members. The introduction of the new process and the training involved in implementing it has led to improvement on the overall LRB process. The new LRB format has allowed additional time for Elected Members to review the reports in advance of the meeting, which has generated more focused discussion on cases where they consider further scrutiny is required and reduced queries as fuller information is contained within the report. This training has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the LRB meeting and has received positive feedback from Elected Members.

With only 5 decisions going to LRB, 40% of original decisions have been upheld.

### Summary

We are making fair progress around sound governance.

With our effective scheme of delegation. with 97.1% of applications decided under this scheme.

Future training will be planned for Elected Members to allow us to meet our new statutory duties.



### The planning authority has effective leadership

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an identified Chief Planning Officer in place?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise on corporate decision making and policy within the broader organisation?
- Is the planning authority's Chief Planning Officer a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute?
- Does the Chief Planning Officer advise and support external bodies through engagement in organisations' committees, advisory groups or working groups?
- Does the planning authority have a strong leadership team that supports a culture of continuous improvement?

### Chief Planning Officer

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires that each planning authority must appoint a Chief Planning Officer who is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI).

Our Chief Planning Officer is Lorna Bowden (MRTPI) – Planning & Place Manager.

### Chief Planning Officer/ corporate decision making and policy

Planning and Place sits within Place in the Enterprise and Communities service cluster. The Place service has been aligned to support and enable the delivery of growth, and the Planning and Place Manager has a critical role in advising on and supporting the delivery the Programme of Work for North Lanarkshire.

Of the seven priorities for delivery through the Programme of Work, Planning and Place directly advises on:

- Transforming Places To better plan and coordinate public and private sector investment to deliver transformational change across town centres and local communities at pace.
- Invest in North Lanarkshire Accelerated outcome delivery and investment via a more streamlined advisory service and aligned operating model and infrastructure plan.

Planning and Place is pivotal in maximising the

potential of North Lanarkshire as a place. The wider service cluster enables us to combine skills and resources to address challenges through integrated solutions, making our areas attractive business locations, improving employment opportunities, encouraging strong sustainable communities, and enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment.

### Chief Planning Officer and external bodies

Offering guidance and support to external bodies, the Chief Planning Officer has participated in and contributed towards a range of groups including:

- Heads of Planning Scotland Performance and Practice and, Executive Committees
- Working with University of West of Scotland and South Lanarkshire Council to establishing a degree course for Planners
- Working with representatives of the Hydrogen Industry to examine what the barriers are to the consenting process
- Clydeplan Steering Group
- Antonine Wall WHS Management Steering Group



#### Leadership team

The Chief Planning Officer has actively supported the Planning Manager (Strategy and Policy) in the position of Chair the Heads of Planning Scotland Development Planning Committee and Vice Chair the Heads of Digital Planning Working Group.

Team members are also actively encouraged to contribute to the Glasgow City Region regional activity.

This participation has added value to our service and to our communities as the Planning and Place Manager continues to nurture the culture of continuous improvement that enhances our service delivery through sharing good practice, skills and knowledge.



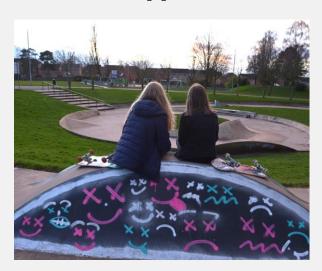
### Summary

We are making fair progress with effective leadership. We have an identified Chief Planning Officer, Lorna Bowden (MRTPI).

Advising on corporate decision making and advising and supporting through external bodies, this role is key to supporting the culture of continuous improvement by strengthening service delivery and improving performance.

Continuing to look for opportunities to enhance our service delivery and improve our performance, sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with our partners and stakeholders is essential.

Looking outwards allows us to understand what others do to support positive outcomes and to share experience, identify knowledge and skill gaps and share innovative approaches, whether that be to our processes, system development or around communication and engagement.





#### **Improvement Action Plan (Culture theme)**

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?		Importance: High Medium Low	Timescale Short term: 1 year Medium term: 3 years Long term: 3+ years	Resources
<b>Attribute 3:</b> Attribute 3: Recruit a new management post and realign existing staff structure to resource a new 'Invest' team that will take a multidisciplinary and phased approach to providing preapplication planning, roads, environmental health, business support and council land ownership advice and support for key projects.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
<b>Attribute 3:</b> Create planning officer working group to support the implementation of service improvement actions and the delivery of the National Planning Improvement Framework.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 3: Review and further develop our complaints system and process to enable better analysis of complaints.	Lorelei Gonnella	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 4: Implement Elected Members training in accordance with new legislation.	Lorna Bowden	High	Medium	
Attribute 5: We will continue to look for opportunities to enhance our service delivery through sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with our partners and stakeholders.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	



## This planning authority has a robust policy and evidence base

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have an up to date Local Development Plan in place and/ or is on track to adoption?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Regional Spatial Strategy in place/ or on track to adoption?
- Has the planning authority's Local
   Development Plan Evidence Report been approved by the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals and/ or on track for approval?
- Have the application of the Local Development Plan's policies been found to be deficient at appeal or judicial review?

### Theme: Tools



A high performing planning authority needs to have an effective local development plan and other strategies in place to provide a vision 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 efficient as possible in doing this. The planning authority makes best use of digital technology and how it manages and uses data.

### Policy and Evidence

Continuous improvement is embedded in our culture The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 sets out a new Development Plan system for Scotland as part of a 'plan led approach' to planning, namely:

- National Planning Framework (NPF) The NPF must have regard to any adopted Regional Spatial Strategy. NPF4 adopted and published by Scottish Ministers 13 February 2022
- Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced a new duty requiring local authorities to prepare a RSS. The RSS lays out the long-term spatial strategies for the strategic development of an area.

 Local Development Plan (LDP) - Planning authorities must prepare an LDP which sets out a spatial strategy for the development of that area.
 It must take into account the NPF and any registered Local Place Plan and it must also have regard to any adopted RSS.

The statutory Development Plan will comprise the NPF and LDP. The RSS though not part of the statutory development plan will have an important role to play in informing future versions of the NPF and LDPs

### Local Development Plan

North Lanarkshire Council Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in July 2022, replacing the North Lanarkshire Local Plan 2012.

### Regional Spatial Strategy

Work to prepare the Glasgow City Region Regional Spatial Strategy will begin once statutory guidance is in place. This guidance from the Scottish Government is expected to be published in 2027/2028.

The Regional Spatial Strategy sub-committee has been established under the Glasgow City Region Head of Place with Glasgow City Region member Local Authorities. The Glasgow City Region member Local Authorities, which comprises the eight local authorities of East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire,



Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils, will collaborate on the preparation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The Local Development Plan contains a spatial strategy, proposals map, action programme for identified developments and schedule of the local authority's land interests affected by Plan policies or proposals. It focuses on specific proposals for the period of 10 years from adoption.

### Local Development Plan Evidence Report

We have now started to prepare the next Local Development Plan - North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 (NLLDP2). NLLDP2 will strengthen links to The Plan for North Lanarkshire in terms of delivery of physical projects.

The first key stage in preparing NLLDP2 is the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) and Participation Statement (DPS). This is an important communication tool setting out the programme for preparing and reviewing NLLDP2. The council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a DPS annually. Following public consultation on the content of the Participation Statement, the final **DPS for 2023/24 has now been published**.

In preparing for North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2, we are evidence gathering to allow us to prepare an Evidence Report. This involves identifying and assessing the evidence available for each policy topic in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and in the local development planning guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

Our Evidence Report is in progress and on track for approval as per the Development Plan Scheme.

During April we launched a survey/consultation exercise on a first batch of topic papers as part of our evidence gathering and consideration for our Evidence Report. This survey seeks the views of a broad range of stakeholders including key agencies, children and young people, and the public.

The topic papers are a first stage assessment of evidence by NPF4 Topic. Some are joint papers, and we aim to publish 20 over the coming months in 3/4 batches. The papers deal with each topic in the same format by outlining the relevant evidence we have identified so far, what our initial assessment of that evidence is, potential connections to other evidence or topics, implications for site selection and potential policy implications for our NLLDP2.

The survey will allow us to check that we have identified appropriate evidence, ask if there is other evidence stakeholders would like to bring to our attention and to gather views on our assessments so far. This process is the first step we can take to ensure we are gathering and collating a robust evidence base to inform our Evidence report.

This will be key to building on the success of our plan-led development management service that supports sustainable and economic growth in North Lanarkshire.







### Local Development Plan policies

We have identified that our current Local Development Plan already aligns with much of the intention and direction of NPF4, giving confidence that the policies and guidance within, and that evolve from the plan will continue to contribute to the delivery of improved economic opportunities and outcomes for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire through the delivery of high quality development on the ground.

Recent Appeal decisions have endorsed North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan's Policies and its complimentary role in relation to NPF4. While all Appeals to date relate to housing, they cut across a number of policy areas and show that NLLDP and NPF4 have defined robust policies across a large range of land uses.

The following appeals were dismissed based on NLLDP/NPF4 Policies.

- Coathill Farm, Luggiebank, December 2023 housing and tourism in the Green Belt
- Glenmavis Road, Airdrie, January 2024 housing in the Green Belt
- Heatheryford Gardens, Plains, March 2024 housing affecting residential amenity
- 120 North Road, Bellshill, April 2024 design quality and existing use in an urban area



### Summary

We are making fair progress and can demonstrate robust policy and evidence base currently.

Our current Local Development Plan was adopted in July 2022.

Recent Appeal decisions have endorsed North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan's Policies and its complimentary role in relation to NPF4 with appeals being dismissed based on our Local Development Plan and NPF4 policies.

As we strive to deliver the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2, we are confident our approach will deliver again in future.



# This planning authority makes best use of data and digital technology

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?
- Does the planning authority have a data governance strategy in place for the management of planning data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use interactive web-mapping, ARC GIS and spatial data?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to use digital approaches to engagement, including website, social media and other platforms?

### e-development portal

With this focus on digital first, we have promoted the use of the ePlanning portal for the submission of applications and additional documents since its introduction in 2009. The ePlanning portal not only brought significant benefits for users, but also allows us to effectively manage planning applications leading to more efficient processes.

Our latest figures from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 demonstrate that nearly 89% of all planning applications made to North Lanarkshire are submitted via the portal, with a further 10% being received by email. We now receive only 1% of planning applications as paper copies, demonstrating our focus and shift to digital planning services has been successful.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire sets out the ambition for a digital North Lanarkshire, with plans to achieve digital communities, a digital economy and a digital council.

### Data governance strategy

Supporting this ambition, the council's Digital and IT Strategy provides the direction to deliver a digital North Lanarkshire and ensuring digital thinking is embedded into everyday behaviors and actions, with staff embracing digital technology to do business significantly differently and always considering a digital-first approach.

Within the planning service we continue to review our service delivery and adapt and update our processes and protocols making use of online platforms and digital solutions available to us.

All our staff are fully equipped with all hardware and software required for hybrid working, including laptops with secure network access, smart phones and appropriate monitors and other hardware for home working, and desk availability as and when required.

The Digital and IT strategy defines a data governance and risk management framework that allows us to manage data effectively and efficiently across the council. These mechanisms have allowed us to establish pathways that ensure we have the most up to date corporate data required for the Local Development Plan 2 evidence report.

Considering the significant increased requirements for data management for the development of the Local Development Plan 2, we have enhanced our approach by creating a specific post within the planning team for a Data Intelligence Analyst.





The Data Intelligence Analyst is responsible for:

- Developing relationships with services both within and outwith the council to promote the use of data and intelligence as a key tool to inform the development of Local Development Plan policy and wider strategies.
- Managing the delivery of interrogation and analysis
   of a broad range of complex information,
   developing insight to formulate evidence-based
   recommendations that challenge and inform
   strategic decisions in support of the development of
   the Local Development Plan (LDP), North
   Lanarkshire Open Space Strategy & Play Sufficiency
   Assessment, linked LDP Programme of Work and
   associated work packages.
- Managing the delivery of service data and information requirements in accordance with corporate standards and processes and the National Digital Planning Programme.
- Contributing to the service and wider corporate response to the National Digital Planning Programme, including participation in Scottish Government, Improvement Service and Digital Office for Local Government pilots, programmes and initiatives.

### Interactive web-mapping, ARC GIS and spatial data

In addition to our data analyst, within our technical support team we have upskilled our senior planning technician and two planning technicians to support this role. The advantages of this approach have been clear. Having undertaken ArcGIS, web content, PowerBI, Uniform and Microsoft forms training we have ensured our planning technicians have essential skillsets leading to in-house digital capability and resilience for the planning service including the ability to use interactive web-mapping, ArcGIS and spatial data.

For our Open Space Strategy (OSS) our digital approach has allowed us to use tablets out on site to gather specific data on these sites. Linking with the confirm system, this spatial data collection has been efficient, and exporting information from Confirm to ArcGIS has allowed us to map and link attributes to the 1539 sites we need for the OSS.

Using an interactive web-mapping system, all our data is translated into easy to use ArcGIS dashboards that will ensure our data is meaningful and accessible to allow and inform effective decision making on open space in North Lanarkshire.

### Digital approaches to engagement

In the initial stages of preparing LDP2, in-house website content control, the use of Microsoft forms and ARCGIS Survey123 has ensured we can communicate and engage timeously and effectively and has ensured the data held by the council is accessed readily.

The ArcGIS Survey123 system also enabled us to carry out a public engagement exercise where we asked people to identify sites that were important to them using a point on a map.

With nearly 1000 sites identified, the success of using the system allowed us to analyse feedback more readily than if we had asked people to provide an address or site description.

Close links with our Corporate Communications ensures that we have a corporately supported social media presence via Facebook, X and GovDelivery (this self-subscription platform has over 7200 subscribers to the North Lanarkshire Planning topic).



### Summary

We are making excellent progress as our use of data and digital technology has hugely developed in recent years.

Making the best use of systems and tools available to us has supported improved performance and reporting.

We have ensured our team has the right easy to access information at the right time at their fingertips to support management, workflow and decision making.



The planning authority has effective and efficient decsion making processes

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority planning have the ability to make decisions on planning applications within the required timeframes?
- Are less than x% of planning decisions overturned at appeal or judicial review?
- Does the planning authority have an up to date Enforcement Charter in place?
- Does the planning authority have the ability to resolve enforcement cases?



### Decision making timescales

The culmination of our approach to develop lean processes and to maximise the use of the systems available to us has enabled the development management team to work efficiently and has improved performance as evidenced through our Scottish Government performance statistics.

The introduction of a comprehensive suite of workflow tasks to support processes, and the introduction of PowerBI dashboards for managers and case officers allows us to effectively manage workflow and performance manage casework. Enhanced reporting allows us to identify and manage dips in performance as they happen and implement the change or support needed to address this. Process review and fortnightly online workshops ensure staff have the opportunity to feed into the process and ensures staff support and buy in.

Scottish Government reporting on planning performance:

	Number of applications not subject to processing agreements	Average Time (Weeks)	Number of applications subject to processing agreements	% of applications with processing agreements concluded within agreed timescales	Total Number of Decisions
All Major Developments	2	9.8	9	88.9%	11
Housing	-	-	4	75.0%	4
Business and Industry	2	9.8	4	100.0%	6
All Local Developments	445	6.4	138	77.5%	583
Householder	267	5.8	12	83.3%	279
All local developments (non householder)	178	7.1	126	77.0%	304
Environmental Impact Assessments					
Local Developments subject to EIA	-	-	-	-	0
AMSCs subject to EIA	-	-	2	50.0%	2



### Local reviews and appeals

	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld (%)	Average Time (Weeks)
Local Reviews	5	40.0%	7.3
Appeals to Scottish Ministers <sup>2</sup>	7	85.7%	

### Enforcement

Our planning enforcement charter is published online and kept up to date. Through our Enforcement Charter, we aim to better manage expectation around the take up of enforcement cased by highlighting what is and what is not a planning matter, and the priority system used for investigating possible breaches in planning control.

Our enforcement activity is reported as below:

	Number
Cases Taken Up	100
Notices Served	1
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0
Prosecutions	0
Number of breaches resolved	174



### Summary

We are making excellent progress with effective decision-making processes and this can be evidenced through our decision making timescales.

As our use of data and digital technology has hugely developed in recent years we are making the best use of systems and tools available to us to support improved performance and reporting.

We have ensured our systems support case officers and ensure all our processes are transparent, efficient and effective.



### Improvement Action Plan (Tools theme)

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	1
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
Attribute 6: Work with partners peer and national groupings to identify best practice to achieve best value in the efficient sharing and use of evidence for development implementation of NLLDP2	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
Attribute 7: We will continue to share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around implementation of digital solutions that lead to improvement, while horizon scanning on future advances on digital technology that can support the planning service.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	
Attribute 8: We will share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around implementation of processes, digital solutions and methods of communication that lead to improvement.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Long	



## This planning authority has good customer care

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Does the planning authority have the ability to offer pre-application advice where it is requested?
- Has the planning authority held regular engagement events with developers and communities?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that customers are satisfied with the service offer by the planning authority?



### Theme: Engage



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.

### Pre-application advice

We are committed to delivering a service that meets the needs and expectations of our customers and stakeholders. To add value to development in the area, and to deliver our core business and key priorities for customers and stakeholders, we offer a tailored pre-application advice service.

Our online forms ensure we have the relevant information needed to carry out pre-application appraisal and to give advice on developer contributions for proposed development. We aim to respond to pre-application requests within four weeks for householder and local development or eight weeks for major development with an initial assessment of

the development against the development plan and other relevant guidance.

We will give an opinion of what the key issues are likely to be and a note of what supporting information should accompany the planning application.

With 7.9% of applications now subject to pre application advice, we continue to monitor take up of our formalised pre-application service.

Having successfully piloted a service that brought together a core team from key services across the council with a diverse range of skills, our restructure will create an Invest team to further support development and investment in North Lanarkshire.

Clients of this pilot service gave positive feedback, citing the collaborative and responsive environment created as being a huge positive for them and their future business. This new team will work closely at an early stage, with businesses and their agents to improve the quality of proposals for development of projects that accord with Local Development Plan zoning.

Our aim is to guide good quality development proposals that will help us process planning applications, roads construction consents and building warrants more effectively by providing timeous specialist feedback to businesses and their agents and by improving internal communication and process.



Considering our broader service delivery, we recognise that a communications strategy would benefit our customer service by examining how best we share information, advice and feedback. In developing this we will seek feedback from applicants, consultees and community organisations to enable us to define how we can more effectively communicate and share information in the way that best suits individuals needs and expectations.

# Engagement events with developers and communities

Previous engagement events with customers have included our Agents Forums, Developers Forums and meeting with Community Councils. Various topics for Agents forums include contaminated land, topics for Developers Forums include contaminated land and challenges for the housebuilding industry, while engagement with Community Councils has led to us collaborating with them to produce a guide and information video on how to view and comment on planning applications.

Corporately we support North Lanarkshire's reputation as a prime location for business and industry by engaging as a panel member for the Chief Executive's Business Breakfast. Tailored for businesses based in and investing in North Lanarkshire, this event welcomed business owners and representatives to join the Chief Executive of North Lanarkshire Council to hear about our plans for the next five years and beyond. Plans that will create more opportunities for

business, boost the local economy, transform towns and communities and create a skilled workforce.

In developing our improvement actions as part of the National Planning Improvement Framework, we invited a broad range of stakeholders to our peer collaborative review workshop to meet with our management team and business improvement lead. This meeting was facilitated by an independent Chair, Nick Wright from Nick Wright Planning.

The group included representation from Scottish Water, Homes for Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, a local developer and an architect. While we didn't get any interest from Community Councils, we did have representation from the NL Access Panel, MECOPP (who represent the Gypsy / Traveller community) and two Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament who attended with a Community Learning and Development officer.

The open discussion around key actions we proposed to take to contribute towards improvement allowed us to shape and adapt our proposed action plan to ensure our improvements better met the needs of stakeholders.

### Customer and stakeholder satisfaction

While we review informal feedback on our service, we welcome the opportunity to analyse formal feedback on tangible measures through the proposed Improvement Service national survey. This nationally consistent approach to measuring customer satisfaction will enable benchmarking and help identify

examples of good practice that will strengthen all Local Authority planning services.



### Summary

We have strived in recent years to improve what we do and have made limited progress. We welcome the opportunity enhance our customer care through our new Invest team, by hosting further agents' forums, by engaging corporately with business and industry, and by examining customer feedback gathered through the proposed national survey.

The nationally consistent approach to feedback offered through the national survey will allow us to measure our performance and identify areas of good practice that could be shared to enhance our approach to customer care.



This planning authority has effective engagement and collaboration with stakeholders and communities

#### We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority undertaken community engagement, for example consistent and effective use of the Place Standard Tool, to inform decision-making processes? Has the planning authority encouraged and promoted planning applications to be submitted through the e-development portal?
- Has the planning authority engaged with a good representation of the community including young people, gypsies and travellers, people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds?
- Has the planning authority supported the production of Local Place Plans when requested?
- Do the results from the customer and stakeholder survey show that stakeholders are satisfied with their collaboration with the planning authority?

### Community engagement strategy

The North Lanarkshire Framework for Engagement reflects a commitment to working with communities across a range of engagement opportunities and approaches.

Our <u>Participation Statement</u> identifies the key stages where we will undertake consultation and we are currently developing a fuller engagement plan in support of the preparation of North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 (NLLDP2).

Engagement with a broad range of stakeholders via an online survey and face to face discussion allowed us to shape our Participation Statement as we gathered feedback on various groups, including seldom heard groups, and individuals preferred method of engagement for the NLLDP2.

As we fully develop our engagement plan, our overall approach to engagement will be shaped by the seven national standards for community engagement:

- Inclusion
- Support
- Planning
- Working together
- Methods
- Communication
- Impact

### Community engagement

Working towards the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2, as part of the process of developing an Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment we have carried out engagement with partners and communities.

Through partner workshops, a Community Board presentation and online surveys that were published online and circulated to our communities (including a tailored survey for children and young people that was circulated to all school children in North Lanarkshire via schools) we asked people to tell us what they thought of green and open space and play sufficiency, and also to tell us what sites were important to them in North Lanarkshire. With positive attendance at our workshops and with over 4200 individual responses to our online surveys the valuable feedback will help inform our strategy.

# Engaging with a representation of the community

Looking at engaging with communities, we continue to have a presence on the North Lanarkshire Access Panel. Through partnership working with our corporate Community Matters team and Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, we are able to reach out to a good representation of the community including seldom heard groups to ensure our approach is inclusive.



In partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, we have held a successful engagement event with the Gypsy / Traveller community. As a result, we have agreed to work jointly on Planning guidance tailored for the Gypsy / Traveller Community and to host a workshop through Heads of Planning Scotland on engagement with Local Development Plans.

Following this successful approach and looking to build on our peer working approach, we are looking forward to working with South Lanarkshire Council to participate in a joint Health engagement event and also a Lanarkshire schools conference that will allow us to engage with the NHS partners and with children across both North and South Lanarkshire.

Our National Planning Improvement Peer review will allow us to engage with and get feedback on our future improvement actions from a broad range of stakeholders, including peer Local Authority, community representatives, Youth Parliament representatives, umbrella organisations (specifically Homes for Scotland), partner organisations (SEPA and Scottish Water) local developers and agents who use our service. In addition, we will hold an internal engagement event to give other council services the opportunity to feed into our improvement action plan.

### Local Place Plans

We have recently invited community organisations to prepare Local Place Plans. Local Place Plans are community-led plans setting out proposals for the development and use of land. They have been introduced as part of the Scottish Government's reform of the planning system. Plans should set out a community's aspirations for its future development

and, when registered, will be considered in the preparation of NLLDP2.

Our Local Place Plan webpage provides and signposts a host of information for local communities and groups who may be interested.

We have asked community bodies to register their interest in preparing a Local Place Plan by the end of June 2024. Following this, we will host a face to face information event with those who registered interest and any other community bodies who may be interested in preparing a Local Place Plan. This event will be facilitated by an independent body and will be designed to guide and support communities progress in the development of Local Place Plans.

# Customer and stakeholder survey feedback

Understanding the needs and expectations of our customers can help us to drive improvement in what we do. We welcome the proposed national survey that will allow us to measure and benchmark stakeholder satisfaction with our service.

In addition to the national survey, we will seek to review existing practice and approaches to community engagement and explore options that have had success with other Planning Authorities to ensure we reach and involve communities as we move forward.

## Summary

We are making limited progress around engagement and how we collaborate with stakeholders and communities.

Our engagement plan is under development; however, we have already started to engage around the Evidence Report for the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2. We will monitor feedback and make any necessary adjustments to how we engage to ensure our approach is effective, meaningful and meets the needs of our partners, stakeholders and communities.

Our approach to supporting communities in developing Local Place Plans will be to secure an independent facilitator to carry out a face to face information event.





# Improvement Action Plan (Engage theme)

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.	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 9: We will host an Agents forum to allow us to have an open discussion around new legislation and policy, and of how that impacts planning applications in North Lanarkshire. We will ask developers to guide the topics to be covered in future forums.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 9: We will participate in the national customer survey and analyse the results to allow us to prepare an improvement action plan.	Lorna Bowden	High	Long	
Attribute 10: Attribute 10: Looking at feedback given through peer collaborative review, we will engage further with applicants, consultees and community organisations to develop an engagement strategy that will help us ensure we can share information, advice and feedback in a way that is tailored to suit customer and stakeholder needs and expectations.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	



### **Attribute 11**

# This planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Is the planning authority aware of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, the evidence that sits behind them and is it using them in decision-making processes?
- Has the planning authority identified tools and approaches to delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places and is implementing them?

# Theme: Place



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.

# Place and Wellbeing Outcomes in decisionmaking processes

The <u>Place and Wellbeing Outcomes</u> provide a consistent and comprehensive focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet. Under five overarching themes of movement, spaces, resources, civic, and stewardship, these themes are based on the Place Standard tool and can combined with this can provide a quantitative and qualitative understanding of our places, what works well, what needs to improve and the priorities for change.

Through our current Local Development Plan, our spatial strategy is based on the Place Principle. Our Place and Amount of Development policies apply to developments proposed across all land use types in North Lanarkshire and our Contributions to Infrastructure and Environmental & Design Qualities policies apply to all applications for planning permission.

These policies aim to achieve the principles set out in the Scottish Government's Creating Places policy statement:

- Distinctive
- Safe and pleasant
- Easy to move around
- Welcoming
- Adaptable
- Resource efficient

The Plan policies aim to improve places and increase sustainable growth and regeneration in North Lanarkshire. These policies recognise and support:

- Development opportunities and infrastructure improvements that contribute to successful, sustainable places and mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change.
- Natural and historic environment assets and resources contribute to resilient, sustainable places.



### National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/2024

- The right development happening in the right places.
- The balance of supply and demand for land uses.
- Places having the infrastructure they need to support sustainable development.

Guidance by the Scottish Government on local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, introduced on the 25 April 2024, has provided a better understanding, and supported its consideration in the decision-making process of planning in ensuring development complements the five place and wellbeing outcomes. Members of the development management team attended a conference in April 2024 which coincided with the guidance being published, where themes pertinent to the place and wellbeing outcomes were explored and how they can be better implemented across public, private and third sector planning.

Awareness of these outcomes were also supported by information sharing between colleagues, where in 2021 a presentation by the Land Use and Sustainability Group was available that better demonstrated the link between land use and public health, and its importance in the context of better achieving place and wellbeing outcomes in planning.

With preparation of the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 underway, community organisations and bodies are being invited to prepare local place plans, a valuable tool of obtaining qualitative information for helping to deliver these places. Furthermore, there are town centre action plans for several North Lanarkshire towns, such as Motherwell, Airdrie, and Bellshill, which help to set out the direction of travel towards a mixed-use town



centre economy to meet the needs of the community, in effect contributing to liveable and productive places. These action plans provide policy consideration in the development management process.

# Tools and approaches to delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places

We are currently exploring options that will allow us to continue to support delivering sustainable, liveable and productive places as we progress with North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2.

## Summary

We are making limited progress around supporting the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places through our Local Development Plan policies.



### **Attribute 12**

# This planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places

We have considered the following when thinking about this attribute and how we have performed over the last year:

- Has the planning authority provided clear and proportionate expectations of Section 75 agreements and set these out in the LDP and pre-application discussions and they are concluded within 6 months of resolution to grant?
- Does the planning authority take a proportionate approach to imposing conditions?
- Does the planning authority have an ambitious local housing land requirement that exceeds the Minimum All Tenure Housing land requirements in NPF4 and is it on track to support delivery?
- Are the number of processing agreements the planning authority has agreed with applicants increasing?
- Does the planning authority have an effective delivery programme in place that supports the delivery of development on the ground?

## Section 75 agreements

Policies in relation to contributions to infrastructure (Section 75 agreements) are specifically addressed in the Local Development Plan in the Placemaking Policies section. The policy spells out specific areas where contributions may be sought (including affordable housing and education) and that such contributions will only be sought where necessary and in accordance with the five tests set out in Planning Circular 3/2012.

The need for contributions to infrastructure are also referred to within the council's tailored pre-application advice, informing developers of the existence of the policy and the potential need to contribute towards provision of required infrastructure, facilities, and services. However, the specific financial contribution that may be required is settled within the full application phase.

At a meeting of the planning committee on 24 February 2022. a new procedure was approved in relation to legacy applications, and particularly those involving legal agreements. This introduced a 6-month time limit for agreements to be concluded. Thereafter, unless the time periods are extended by the Planning and Place Manager, the procedure advises that the application would be refused.

This procedure is being kept under review and work is ongoing to agree a format for a standard S75 legal agreement that should significantly speed up this part of the process. Once agreed this will be publicised on the council's webpage so that our expectations on what an agreement should include and how it will be worded is made clear from the outset.

## Planning conditions

The imposition of conditions is reflected in the scale of development for all applications, where conditions are only imposed where they meet the 6 tests set out in Planning Circular 4/1988.

Furthermore, and wherever practicable, we discuss planning conditions with applicants in advance particularly where they could have an impact on project viability. For example, planning conditions related to the council's environmental health and ecological services (e.g., noise and light impact assessments, tree planting and landscaping plans) these are dealt with during assessment of applications. This ensures the applicant is made aware of the impact that planning conditions may have on the financial viability of their project at the earliest possible stage – aided by direct and honest communication from the delegated officer – rather than post-approval.

We are currently exploring the use of the conditions monitoring module that will allow us to manage the discharge of planning conditions through taking a risk assessment-based approach.

# Local housing land requirement

As required by NPF4, the next Local Development Plan (NLLDP2) will identify a Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR). Until then, the most up-to-date target for housing land is the minimum all-tenure housing land requirement (MATHLR) set by Scottish Government for each authority area in NPF4 Annex E, further endorsed by Lord Boyd's recent Court of



Sessions decision for West Lothian Council, May 2024. For North Lanarkshire Council, the MATHLR is 7,350 units over a 10-year period and includes 25% generosity built in. The 2023 Housing Land Audit provides the most up-to-date position on the housing land supply and the established supply for the authority area is 17,318 all-tenure units, of which 8,646 units are programmed as deliverable over the next 7-year period.

## Processing agreements

Processing agreements with all major development applications and many local development applications. Our direct and proactive approach to encouraging their use has had a positive response. Supporting this approach, we have developed a new process and staff guidance to create a more consistent approach when negotiating processing agreements. Based on the upturn in our performance for meeting timescales for applications with processing agreements, we can evidence this process had made a positive impact, however a introducing a peer review of stalled cases may support our approach to delivery.

Planning Processing Agreement applications 2023 - 24: 175 (PPA met 86%)

Planning Processing Agreements applications 2022 - 23: 152 (PPA met 78%)

# Delivery programme supporting the delivery of development on the ground

Our delivery programme in support of the delivery of the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 will support the delivery of development in North Lanarkshire. Our delivery programme is currently under development.



### Summary

We are making limited progress as we support the delivery of appropriate development though our policies and procedures.

While we look to develop the Local Development Plan delivery programme, we recognise that further monitoring of the discharge of conditions can help strengthen this position.

In addition, performance monitoring of the process around the conclusion of legal agreements has the potential to further support the delivery of appropriate development.





# Improvement Action Plan (People theme)

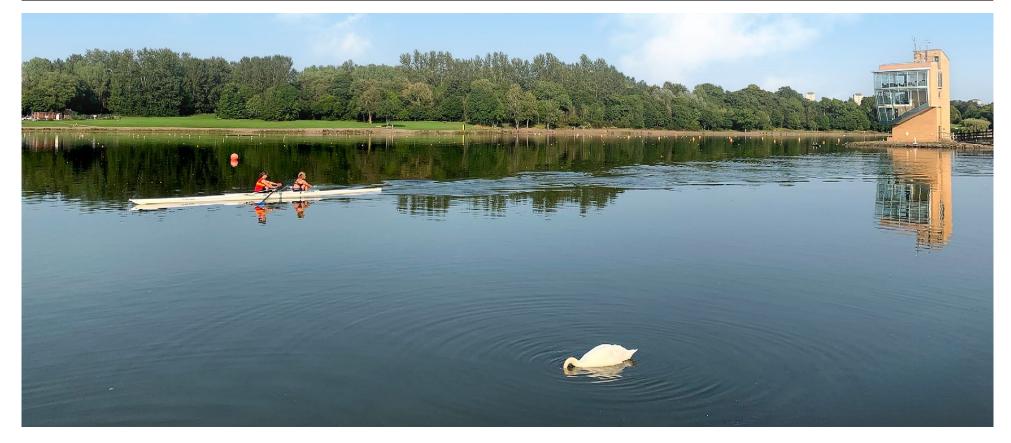
Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)
11. The planning authority supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places	4
12. This planning authority supports the delivery of appropriate development	4

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
Attribute 11: Assess the scope of current policies, projects and strategies, with place-based outcomes and outputs, and the associated place-based consultations supporting them with a view to identifying gaps that will guide us in carrying out focused place-based discussions or, where required, surveys with our communities.	Lorna Bowden	High	Short	
Attribute 12: Review and test the conditions monitoring module and establish a process around use to better support the management of a risk assessment approach to discharging planning conditions.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Medium	
Attribute 12: We will undertake a Planning Processing Agreement (PPA) process review specifically around the extension to PPA where dates are not fulfilled.	Moira Dell	Medium	Short	



Attribute		Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)		
Attribute 12: We will undertake a process review around stalled sites and legacy cases to establish a methodology to progress cases.	Moira Dell	Medium	Short	
Attribute 12: We will review our Section 75 model agreements to ensure they are accessible and easy to use.	Lorna Bowden	Medium	Short	





### **Good Practice**

# **Attribute 2:** The Planning Authority has a valued and supported workforce.

# Workforce Strategy - Recruiting, developing and retaining staff

### Context

The planning profession in Scotland, particularly in the public sector, faces challenges with an aging workforce, a growing percentage of planners working in the private sector, and fewer planners coming into the profession (Source: RTPI).

Focusing on building a workforce for the future, we have put in place actions to address staff training, to enable career progression and to share knowledge and experience.

This work has been ongoing for several years and has demonstrable success while still ongoing as we continue to look for opportunities to build in resilience to our team.

### What happened?

From 2021 to date we have:

 Mentored and supported for our planning technicians to upskill and get more experience through dealing with planning validation, training in the use of ArcGIS and enhance their qualifications.

- Supported two planning technicians through University to get a Post Graduate Certificate in Spatial Planning.
- Created opportunity for our newly qualified Technicians to become planning assistants.
- Introduced a new career planner grade allowing planning assistants who achieve chartered status with the RTPI to progress to officer grade.
- Collaborated with the councils Talent and Organisational Development team to support the University of West of Scotland in the development of a new undergraduate planning degree (anticipated to be introduced in September 2025).
- Provided in-house development opportunities through the North Lanarkshire Council Learning Academy for existing staff to gain develop leadership potential.
- We have introduced non-planning roles with key skill sets to strengthen the team. The senior project officer and data analyst posts have been specifically created to support programme planning, data management and analysis, and performance reporting allowing planners to focus on their core duties.
- Our corporate resources raise awareness and provide a wealth of wellbeing and support on topics that will support our workforce.

### Areas of collaboration

Lead officer: Lorna Bowden

Collaboration with: Other Local Authority Staff, University of West of Scotland.

### What was the overall result?

- We have grown our own workforce by providing support and opportunity.
- We have retained qualified staff by enabling progression.
- Provided opportunity for staff development to further train and develop with the outcome of having more qualified planners.
- We have successfully resourced a team with a broader skillset to support future work and to ensure we meet our future commitments.

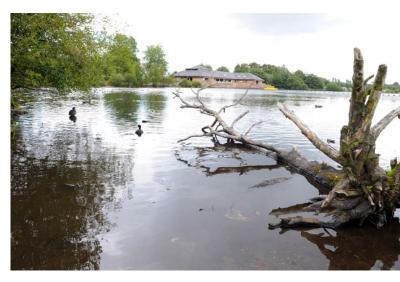
### **Lessons learned**

In future to open more avenues to recruit and develop qualified planners, we will consider graduate placements for people with degrees relating to planning and employ them while support them to gain experience and undertake the planning qualification.

We feel our workforce strategy supports the full range of planning outcomes.



NPF4	Play, recreation and sport
Sustainable places	Flood risk and water management
Climate change and nature crisis	☐ Health and safety
Climate mitigate and adaptation	☐ Digital Infrastructure
Biodiversity	
☐ Natural Places	Productive places
Soils	Community Wealth Building
Forestry, woodland and trees	Business and industry
Historic assets and places	City, town, local and commercial centres
Green belts	Retail
☐ Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty	Rural development
buildings	Tourism
Coast development	☐ Culture and creativity
Energy	Aquaculture
Zero waste	☐ Minerals
Sustainable transport	
	Place and Wellbeing Outcomes
Liveable places	☐ Movement
Design, quality and place	Spaces
Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	Resources
Quality homes	Civic
Rural homes	Stewardship
☐ Infrastructure first	
Heat and cooling	
Blue and green infrastructure	







# **Attribute 7:** This Planning Authority makes best use of data and digital technology.

# Data and digital technology - A digital first approach

### Context

With a focus on digital first solutions to service delivery, we have embraced digital technology to ensure our team has the right information at the right time to enable efficient and effective service delivery.

### What happened?

Our use of data and digital technology has hugely developed in recent years. Making the best use of online platforms, systems and tools available to us, we have supported improved performance and reporting. We have upskilled staff and ensured our team has the right information at the right time, in a format that is easy to access to support management, workflow and decision making.

#### We have:

- Introduced a Data Analyst post within the planning team
- Ensured all staff are fully equipped for hybrid working with the right hardware and systems access
- Using the Idox Enterprise system, developed effective workflow tools and we have a full suite of workflow tasks
- Developed a full suite of PowerBI performance

- dashboards for performance management purposes.
- Developed a full suite of PowerBI team and individual officer casework dashboards for casework management purposes.
- Upskilled our planning technicians in the use of ArcGIS, and developed capacity in the team to support Uniform and create, edit and manage website content.
- Taken a digital approach to consultation using ArcGIS Survey123 and Microsoft Forms

### Areas of collaboration

Lead officer: Alex Hamilton

Collaboration with: Other local authority staff and planning authority staff.

### What was the overall result?

#### We now have:

- Full capability for agile working across the whole planning team.
- Fully developed workflow tools to enable digital management of casework.
- Comprehensive PowerBl performance management and workflow dashboards that link with the Uniform case work system. This has allowed more effective performance management that has supported the team and led to improved decision-making timescales.
- The in-house capability to further develop how we use and interrogate the Uniform system as required.

- The ability to manage the Open Space Strategy site mapping, digital data collection and consultation.
- The ability to effectively manage data for the development of Local Development Plan 2.
- The ability to publish online as needed.
- The ability to carry out online survey work as needed.

### Lessons learned

When developing our workflow system, we were developing our knowledge and skills as we progressed. This meant that the change for the wider planning team was incremental. If we were to embark on this exercise again with the knowledge and experience we have gained, we would look to fully develop our workflow tasks and carry out a shorter period of radical change. This approach would be supported by training and on the floor support for officers.

# What contribution did it make towards delivering outcomes?

We feel our digital approach supports the full range of planning outcomes.



NPF4
Sustainable places
Climate change and nature crisis
Climate mitigate and adaptation
Biodiversity
☐ Natural Places
Soils
Forestry, woodland and trees
Historic assets and places
Green belts
Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
Coast development
Energy
Zero waste
Sustainable transport
Liveable places
Design, quality and place
Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods
Quality homes
Rural homes
☐ Infrastructure first
Heat and cooling
Blue and green infrastructure

Play, recreation and sport	Place and Wellbeing Outcomes
Flood risk and water management	Movement
☐ Health and safety	Spaces
☐ Digital Infrastructure	Resources
Productive places	Civic
Community Wealth Building	Stewardship
Business and industry	
City, town, local and commercial centres	
Retail	
Rural development	
☐ Tourism	
Culture and creativity	
Aquaculture	
Minerale	





# **Attribute 8:** This Planning Authority has effective and efficient decision making processes.

### Decision making processes.

### **Context**

With a reported year on year increase in average decision making timescales, while for the most part we were still performing ahead of the national average, our customer feedback highlighted that speed of decision was a priority and therefore we needed to address our performance and reduce our decision making timescales.

### What happened?

We carried out an in-depth review of our development management processes. We identified areas where we could make improvements in our application and decision-making processing. The review was carried out by the council's Business Development team, working closely with planning management during 2021-22, with every step of the review fed back and next steps agreed.

The scope and objective of the review was defined by the Planning and Place manager. The key was to develop consistency and create a more streamlined process from planning application to decision.

After initially discussing with management, our Business Development team met with a representation of staff members to discuss and establish as 'as is' position. Having mapped out current practice and identified areas of inconsistency, we included the review of our systems and how we used them into the scope of the exercise.

We held staff workshops to examine the 'as is' and discuss the 'to be' process of each step in the development management process. This helped us define and reach consensus on the best route forward ultimately developing a new process that was consistent, efficient and that met the needs of our customers by reducing decision making timescales.

### Areas of collaboration

Lead officer: Moira Dell

Collaboration with: Other local authority staff and planning authority staff.

### What was the overall result?

#### We now have:

- Improved performance timescales.
- Achieved buy-in throughout the team for the new processes

- Upskilled staff in the use of technology
- Enhanced our use of the Uniform system
- Improved our record keeping ensuring we could meet new statutory reporting requirements

#### Lessons learned

After initially meeting with managers to establish the 'as is' and 'to be' process, we agreed that we needed to speak directly with the team. The best people to give feedback on and discuss improvement with process is the people using the process.

Also, we realised that communication around why we were making changes wasn't as strong as it could have been. Having direct contact with the team allowed us to discuss the reasons around the change.

# What contribution did it make towards delivering outcomes?

We feel our digital approach supports the full range of planning outcomes.





NPF4	Play, recreation and sport
Sustainable places	☐ Flood risk and water management
Climate change and nature crisis	Health and safety
Climate mitigate and adaptation	☐ Digital Infrastructure
Biodiversity	Productive places
Natural Places	☐ Community Wealth Building
Soils	☐ Business and industry
Forestry, woodland and trees	City, town, local and commercial centre
Historic assets and places	Retail
Green belts	Rural development
Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings	Tourism
Coast development	<ul><li>☐ Culture and creativity</li><li>☐ Aquaculture</li></ul>
☐ Energy	☐ Minerals
Zero waste	Place and Wellbeing Outcomes
Sustainable transport	Movement
Liveable places	Spaces
Liveable places	Resources
Design, quality and place	Civic
Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	Stewardship
☐ Quality homes	
Rural homes	
☐ Infrastructure first	
Rlue and green infrastructure	





# Appendix 1 - Improvement Action Plan

Importance	Timescale
High	Short term - 1 year
Medium	Medium term - 3 years
Low	Long term - 3+ years

Theme	Attribute	Score (1=Making excellent progress, 5= No progress)	Action	Importance	Timescale
	Has sufficient resources and skills to maximise	3	Review staff structure to ensure we can continue to meet our statutory duty and corporate priorities.	High	Short
	productivity.		Seek feedback directly from staff via our fortnightly staff workshops, and where appropriate topic focused workshops to ensure frontline staff continue to have the opportunity to shape working practice, process, highlight areas for improvement and lead the delivery of change.	Medium	Medium
		2	Introduce structured team meetings, regular case officer 1-1s and peer review on stagnant cases to establish solutions that could enable decision making.	High	Short
			Continue with our workforce planning by continuing to create opportunities for staff development and progression that will strengthen the team and prepare for future challenges, including the introduction of a graduate trainee planning post.	High	Long
			Strengthen PRD process by setting deadlines that will ensure all staff/managers undertake PRD meetings in time to allow annual training to be scheduled.	Medium	Short
			Create opportunity for skill sharing across Local Authorities by linking Continued Professional Development training and learning to increase opportunities for staff development.	Medium	Medium



### National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/2024

Culture	Has embedded continuous improvement.	3	Recruit a new management post and realign existing staff structure to resource a new 'Invest' team that will take a multidisciplinary and phased approach to providing preapplication planning, roads, environmental health, business support and council land ownership advice and support for key projects.	High	Short
			Create planning officer working group to support the implementation of service improvement actions and the delivery of the National Planning Improvement Framework.	High	Short
			Review and further develop our complaints system and process to enable better analysis of complaints.	Medium	Medium
	4. Has sound governance.		Implement Elected Members training in accordance with new legislation.	High	Medium
	5. Has effective leadership.		We will continue to look for opportunities to enhance our service delivery through sharing good practice, skills and knowledge with our partners and stakeholders.	Medium	Long
Tools	6. Has robust policy and evidence base.	3	Work with partners peer and national groupings to identify best practice to achieve best value in the efficient sharing and use of evidence for development implementation of NLLDP2.	High	Long
	7. Makes best use of digital technology.	2	We will continue to share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around implementation of digital solutions that lead to improvement, while horizon scanning on future advances on digital technology that can support the planning service.	Medium	Long
	Has effective decision- making processes.	1	We will share best practice with peer authorities and learn from others around implementation of processes, digital solutions and methods of communication that lead to improvement.	Medium	Long



### National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/2024

Engage	9. Has good customer care	4	We will host an Agents forum to allow us to have an open discussion around new legislation and policy, and of how that impacts planning applications in North Lanarkshire. We will ask developers to guide the topics to be covered in future forums.	Medium	Medium
			We will participate in the national customer survey and analyse the results to allow us to prepare an improvement action plan.	High	Long
	10. Has effective engagement & collaboration with stakeholders and communities.	4	Looking at feedback given through peer collaborative review, we will engage further with applicants, consultees and community organisations to develop an engagement strategy that will help us ensure we can share information, advice and feedback in a way that is tailored to suit customer and stakeholder needs and expectations.	High	Short
Place	11. Supports the delivery of sustainable, liveable and productive places.		Assess the scope of current policies, projects and strategies, with place-based outcomes and outputs, and the associated place-based consultations supporting them with a view to identifying gaps that will guide us in carrying out focused place-based discussions or, where required, surveys with our communities.	High	Short
	12. Supports the delivery of consented development.		Review and test the conditions monitoring module and establish a process around use to better support the management of a risk assessment approach to discharging planning conditions.	Medium	Medium
			We will undertake a Planning Processing Agreement (PPA) process review specifically around the extension to PPA where dates are not fulfilled.	Medium	Short
			We will undertake a process review around stalled sites and legacy cases to establish a methodology to progress cases.	Medium	Short
			We will review our Section 75 model agreements to ensure a standardised, accessible and easy to use format.	Medium	Short



### This document can be made available in a range of languages and formats, including large print, braille, audio, electronic and accessible formats.

To make a request, please contact Corporate Communications at: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

'S urrainn dhuinn an sgrìobhaidh seo a chur ann an diofar chànanan agus chruthan, a' gabhail a-steach clò mòr, braille, cruth claisneachd agus cruthan dealanach agus ruigsinneach.

Gus iarrtas a dhèanamh, cuir fios gu Conaltradh Corporra aig: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

Niniejszy dokument można otrzymać w wielu różnych językach i formatach, w tym również dużym drukiem, alfabetem Braille'a, w wersji dźwiękowej, elektronicznej i w innych dostępnych formatach.

Prośby należy składać na ręce zespołu ds. komunikacji drogą elektroniczną na adres:

corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

此文件可以多种不同语言和格式提供,包括大字体、点字、音频、电子和易读格式。

如想提出请求,请联系企业传讯部: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

اس دستاویز کو مختلف زبانوں اور صورتوں بشمول بڑے حروف، بریل، آؤیو، الیکٹر انک اور قابل رسائی صورتوں میں فراہم کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ راہ کرم درخواست کے لیے کارپوریٹ کمیونیکیشنز سے اس پر رابطہ فرہائیں: corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk

Produced by

### **NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**

Planning and Place **Enterprise and Communities** Civic Centre, Windmillhill Street Motherwell ML1 1AB

- t. 01236 632500
- e. planningenquiry@northlan.gov.uk

NORTHLANARKSHIRE.GOV.UK

