



## Planning and Access Committee

**Meeting: Monday 30 June 2025**

### Agenda item 6: NPIF Update

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**SUBMITTED BY:** Director of Place

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	National Planning Improvement Framework
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1. Summary and reason for presentation .....	1
2. Recommendation .....	2
3. National Planning Improvement Framework.....	2
4. Improvement Actions.....	3
5. Customer and Stakeholder Survey.....	4
6. Conclusion.....	4
7. List of Appendices .....	5

#### 1. Summary and reason for presentation

1.1. This paper provides members with an update on the National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF). This is a pilot programme – led by the

Improvement Service (IS)- which replaces the annual Planning Performance Framework.

- 1.2. This paper also provides the outcome of a Scotland wide customer satisfaction survey undertaken by the Improvement Service.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. That Members:

**CONSIDER and NOTE** the content of this report and the appendices.

## **3. National Planning Improvement Framework**

- 3.1. The IS, led by the National Planning Improvement Champion—appointed under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 - have been piloting new arrangements for assessing planning authority performance and identifying improvement actions through the pilot of a new NPIF in 3 cohorts.
- 3.2. This new approach replaces the long-standing *Planning Performance Framework* (PPF), which authorities have been producing for over a decade.
- 3.3. The NPIF focuses on 12 attributes of a high-performing planning authority across five themes. It moves beyond application statistics to promote increased collaboration and the sharing of best practice between planning authorities. The themes and associated attributes are as follows:

### **Theme: People**

1. (The Authority) 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.

- 3.4. The 'RAG' ratings which authorities historically received in response to previous PPF submissions is not part of the pilot arrangements and the focus for the assessment moves beyond decision making timescales. The process is a self- assessment, with peer review, and is not scored by the Scottish Government. The new approach aims to take a more holistic look at the performance of the planning system. Identified improvement actions can recognise that the focus for change can be on other key organisations such as statutory consultees, agents and applicants or even the Scottish Government.
- 3.5. The National Park Planning Service took part in cohort 3 of the pilot and was required to undertake a Performance Assessment against the 12 attributes and identify improvement actions together with a delivery timeline spanning the next three years. Unlike the PPF, future submissions in the next 2/3 years are expected to provide progress updates on the Improvement Action Plan rather than full performance assessments.
- 3.6. The initial Performance Assessment and Improvement Action Plan was developed internally and was 'user tested' through a collaborative peer review workshop with our partnered authority Moray Council, as well as a wide range of stakeholders—including the Planning and Access Committee Chair, Claire Chapman, community council representatives, internal and external consultees, agents, and landowners. Feedback from the workshops led to valuable revisions of the action plan, particularly in response to community councils, who highlighted challenges in understanding complex planning issues and the need for further support and upskilling.
- 3.7. The Performance Assessment and Improvement Action Plan was submitted to the Improvement Service in April 2025. It has since been endorsed by the Improvement Service and submitted to the Minister of Public Finance, who has responsibility for planning within Scottish Government. The documents are available as appendices to this paper.

#### **4. Improvement Actions**

- 4.1. The Planning Service has identified ten Improvement Actions across the five themes of People, Culture, Tools, Engage and Place.
- 4.2. The Actions for year one which are under the control of the Planning Service include the following:
- Continued focus on reducing decision making timescales for householder and local non-contentious applications.
  - Develop ongoing review of staff personal development plans
  - Production of our first planning application fee charter including consideration of discretionary fees
  - Enforcement Charter Review

4.3. The Planning Service therefore aims to complete these tasks over the next financial year.

4.4. It is important to note that there is no additional staffing resource to complete these tasks which are in addition to the 'business as usual' works of the development management team.

## 5. Customer and Stakeholder Survey

5.1. The National Planning Improvement team conducted the first *National Customer and Stakeholder Survey* in November 2024, gathering feedback from all 34 planning authorities. Results, released on 3 April, showed 639 responses nationally—27 of which (4.2%) came from LLTNPA. This is a strong response rate given the authority's scale and relative application volume.

5.2. The Planning Service was provided a with a copy of our individual results which exceeded national satisfaction levels across all criteria, reflecting our ongoing commitment to delivering an open, approachable, and customer-focused planning service.

5.3. A further survey is expected to be undertaken by IS at the end of the year.

	Very satisfied/ satisfied %		Dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied %	
	National	LLTNPA	National	LLTNPA
Satisfaction with Time Taken	44.7	77.7	55.3	22.2
Overall Satisfaction	46.2	74.1	53.8	25.9
	Very Good / Good %		Poor / Very Poor %	
Standard of Communication	49.5	77.8	50.5	22.2
Quality of Information	54.4	77.8	45.7	22.2
Service Offered by Staff	51.3	74.1	48.6	25.9
Time taken to respond	45.6	74	54.5	25.9
	Strongly agree/ agree %		Disagree/ Strongly Disagree%	
Treated Fairly	55	77.8	45.1	22.2

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. The NPIF is a pilot programme aimed at increasing collaboration and sharing of best practice between planning authorities. It demonstrates an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and identifies specific focus areas for the next three years. The Performance Assessment and Improvement Action Plan are available to view on the Improvement Service Website.

## 7. List of Appendices

### 7.1. Appendix 1 Performance Assessment

[Loch-Lomond-Performance-Assessment.pdf](#)

### 7.2. Appendix 2 Improvement Action Plan

[Loch-Lomond-and-The-Trossachs-IAP.pdf](#)

### 7.3. Customer and Stakeholder Survey Results – National Analysis

[national Planning Improvement Customer and Stakeholder Survey Results](#)