

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Planning Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref LB

Date

05/12/24

## Planning and Place Performance Report 2023/24

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### Executive Summary

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced statutory reporting of the performance of Planning Authorities. This report seeks to inform the Committee of the feedback from the National Planning Improvement Coordinator on the outcome of the submission of the Planning and Place Service as part of the new National Planning Improvement Process and to update on the performance of the service against the key performance indicators for 2023-24. The report also sets out the improvement actions that the service has identified to focus on in the coming period.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee consider the content of this report and endorse the actions being taken to improve performance and service delivery.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	All ambition statements
Programme of Work	Transforming Places

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Committee will be used to seeing the annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) reports where we reported our performance on an annual basis. These reports were voluntary based on an agreement between the Scottish Government and the Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS). The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced mandatory national performance monitoring and to oversee this process and to provide the planning authorities with advice on how to improve the performance of their functions, the role of National Planning Improvement Co-ordinator (NPIC) has been created within the Improvement Service.
- 1.2 The Planning Improvement Co-ordinator was appointed in September 2023 and has been collaborating with HOPS, planning authorities and other stakeholders to develop a suitable mechanism for implementing change. The priority has been to develop a new performance and improvement model that will build upon the lessons learned from Planning Performance Frameworks. Given this, a new National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF) is being piloted. The key principles of NPIF are:

- **A renewed focus on improvement.** NPIF aims to use planning authorities' self-assessment to identify areas of improvement to inform an improvement action plan.
- **Peer Collaborative Review.** Scottish Government marking will be replaced by peer review involving NPIC, other planning authorities and stakeholders.
- **Measuring quality.** NPIF looks to incorporate indicators that better assess impacts, outcomes achieved, and the quality of the service provided.
- **A high performing planning authority.** NPIF focusses on assessment against the attributes of a high performing planning authority such as: having the tools to do the job; engagement; people; culture; and place.
- **Recognising dependencies.** NPIF aims to recognise that planning authorities depend on other people and organisations in delivering their service.
- **Resources.** NPIF has been designed to be proportionate and not add to the demand on planning authorities' resources.

1.3 As this is a new concept for planning authorities, the approach taken has been for authorities to pilot developing their new National Planning Improvement Frameworks and improvement action plans in three tranches over 2024/25. Ten volunteers took part in the first pilot group of authorities. Through this stage North Lanarkshire was partnered to work with Fife Council looking at sharing best practice. We have now completed this exercise and have received our feedback from the NPIC on our improvement action plan for 2024-25. The feedback confirmed the improvement action plan has been endorsed, and our new National Planning Improvement Framework is now published online.

1.4 The Scottish Government continues to publish Planning Application Statistics and the figures for the performance of the service are detailed in section two, below.

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## 2. Report

### Key roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Planning Service is part of the Place Service and is established to:

- Deliver a wide range of statutory planning functions including the Local Development Plan, assessing applications for new development, and facilitating place change.
- Enable economic growth, further community wealth building, and protect and enhance North Lanarkshire's built and natural environment.
- Deliver some non-statutory planning functions, including planning enforcement.

2.2 The service has a key role in supporting delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire by facilitating new development to grow the council's economic base.

### Performance KPIs

2.3 Every year the Scottish Government publishes statistics for the 34 Planning authorities, and these were produced in November 2024 for the 2023/24 reporting period. Table 1 shows our performance in the key outcomes for Development Planning.

**Table 1: National Headline Indicators - Development Planning**

<b>Development Planning</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
<b>Local and Strategic Development Planning:</b>		
Age of local development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	<b>9 months</b>	<b>1 year 9 months</b>
Will the local development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs<sup>1</sup></b>		
Housing approvals	<b>730 units</b>	<b>884 units</b>
Housing completions over the last 5 years	<b>5,230 units</b>	<b>5,261 units</b>
Marketable employment land supply	<b>466.29 ha</b>	<b>441.10 ha</b>
Employment land take-up during reporting year	<b>5.99 ha</b>	<b>5.13 ha</b>

- 2.4 Table 2 shows the Development Management performance of North Lanarkshire in comparison to the Scottish average. Where no figure is given, the Scottish Government has not published a national figure.

**Table 2: National Headline Indicators Key outcomes – Development Management**

<b>Development Management:</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2023-24 Scottish Average</b>
<b>Project Planning</b>			
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	<b>53.3% (8)</b>	<b>88.9% (9)</b>	<b>47.1% (107)</b>
<b>Decision Making</b>			
Application approval rate	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>96.6%</b>	<b>92.3%</b>
Delegation rate	<b>95.8%</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>96.5%</b>
Validation	<b>60.1%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	

<b>Decision-making Timescales</b>			
Major Developments	<b>19.4 weeks</b>	<b>9.8 weeks</b>	<b>36.1 weeks</b>
Local developments (non-householder)	<b>7.3 weeks</b>	<b>7.1 weeks</b>	<b>11.6 weeks</b>
Householder developments	<b>6.6 weeks</b>	<b>5.8 weeks</b>	<b>8.3 weeks</b>
<b>Legacy Cases</b>			
Number cleared during reporting period	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	
Number remaining	<b>48</b>	<b>75</b>	

2.5 Table 3 shows the performance of the Planning Service when it comes to appeals. Where appeals are to the Scottish Ministers the percentage of cases where the Reporter upheld the decision of the Planning Committee is significantly higher than the Scottish average, however, the percentage of delegated decisions upheld by the Local Review Body decreased in 2023-24 and was lower than the national average.

**Table 3: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals** (\*\*SG annual stats)

	<b>Original decisions upheld</b>					<b>2023-24</b>
	<b>2022-23</b>		<b>2023-24</b>		<b>Total no. 2023-24</b>	<b>National statistics</b>
<b>Type</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>%</b>
<b>Local reviews</b>	5	45.5%	5	40.0%	12	59.2%
<b>Appeals to Scottish Ministers</b>	3	42.9%	7	85.7%	8	53.9%

**\*\*Local Review Bodies dealt with 566 cases nationally in 2023/24. The original decision was upheld in almost two-thirds of cases (59.2%).**

### **Service priorities for 2024/25**

- 2.6 The service will continue to work to implement improvements across all performance indicators, as stated in paragraph 1.3 above, and to implement our improvement action plan. This improvement action plan has been developed with the assistance of a peer review group made up of a range of customers and the Convener of Planning and endorsed by the NPIC.
- 2.7 Overall, the performance of the service is considered to be good, but it has been identified that there are some areas where there is opportunity for development, and these are the focus of our improvement action plan for the 2024/25 period. Work on these actions is already well underway.
- 2.8 We identified the following actions as our key priorities in the coming year:
- Introduce peer review on stagnant cases to establish solutions that could enable decision making.

- 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.
- 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.
- Create planning officer working group to support the implementation of service improvement actions and the delivery of the National Planning Improvement Framework.
- Implement Elected Members training in accordance with new legislation.
- 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 North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan2.
- We will participate in the national customer survey and analyse the results to allow us to prepare an improvement action plan.
- 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.

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### 3. Measures of success

- 3.1 The measures of success are not only in relation to the performance indicators that are set out in the tables in this report but are also more qualitative in terms of ensuring that the Planning service, through its engagement with applicants and other stakeholders, contributes to the delivery of good quality development in the right locations that facilitate delivery of The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the council's Local Development Plan.

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### 4. Supporting documentation

[National Planning Improvement Framework 2023/24](#) (this includes the improvement action plan for 2024/25)

[Scottish Government Planning Applications Statistics 2023/2024](#)



**Pamela Humphries**  
**Chief Officer (Place)**

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## 5. Impacts

<p><b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?</p>

Yes  No

**5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact**

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.8 Communications impact**

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.9 Risk impact**

Is there a risk impact?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

**5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

**5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact**

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes  No