

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Development Management Strategic Place Planning
<u>Date:</u>	9 June 2025
<u>Title of Update:</u>	National Planning Improvement Framework
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UPDATE:

For more than a decade the planning service at Aberdeen City Council has published an annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF). This has been submitted to Scottish Ministers who have given high level feedback. Over that period, Aberdeen has demonstrated evidence of continuous improvement.

PPFs have now been replaced by a National Planning Improvement Framework (NPIF), coordinated by the Scottish Government's Improvement Service. In 2024-25 Aberdeen City Council was part of the third and final cohort of planning authorities to trial this new national reporting structure. As part of this pilot the planning authority was paired with Falkirk Council, which has provided an opportunity for mutual support and learning between the two Councils.

There are two parts to the NPIF.

The first part consists of a Assessment Report by the Planning authority (available [here](#)) in which the service was required to self-assess and measure itself against 12 attributes of a high performing planning authority under 5 main themes defined to be applied to all Scottish planning authorities by the Improvement Service following a nationwide consultation in 2023-24.

The second part of the NPIF is a series of improvement actions incorporated into an agreed Improvement Action Plan (available [here](#)). The Action Plan will form the focus of improvement activity by the planning authority over the next couple of years and will be closely monitored by the Improvement Service.

As required by the framework the planning service's draft Assessment Report was critically assessed by a collaborative peer review group, externally facilitated by David Miller of the James Hutton Institute. The peer review group considered the Authority's self-assessment, focused on areas for improvement and was used to inform the content of the final Assessment Report and actions in the Improvement Action Plan. The peer review group was selected by

identifying and inviting key external and internal stakeholders including consultees such as SEPA, NHS Grampian, ACC Environmental Health, the Community Council Forum, a representative from Aberdeen Society of Architects and a planning consultancy (Ryden) as well as the Convenor and Vice Convenor of the Planning Development Management Committee and the partner planning authority (Falkirk Council). The National Planning Improvement Champion (Craig McLaren) was also in attendance.

Aberdeen City Council's Assessment and Action Plan has been endorsed by the Improvement Service and was sent to the Council's Chief Executive and the Chief Planner. The Action Plan will form the focus of improvement activity by the planning service over the next couple of years and will be closely monitored by the Improvement Service.