



National Planning Improvement Framework

Attribute 7: The planning authority makes the best use of data and digital technology

Digital Transformation



During 2023-24 95% of applications received were submitted through the Planning Portal, accounting for 635 of the 669 applications received. We strongly encourage the use of the Portal on our website at [eDevelopment · East Ayrshire Council \(east-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/eDevelopment) and [Planning application forms · East Ayrshire Council \(east-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/PlanningApplicationForms) and have also introduced a surcharge for paper submissions of applications to further incentivise the use of electronic submissions. In addition to this use for planning applications, we have also created a workaround to take advantage of the portal for the submissions of applications to discharge planning conditions. That process is not supported by the Portal however through the use of the 'application to discharge conditions of a planning permission in principle' we have been able to encourage applications made through the Portal and subsequently change the application type when received. That minimises our handling of documents and ensures better efficiency.

Our processes are now fully electronic, with any hard copy information quickly digitised and we have operated in this manner for a number of years. In respect of a formalised pathway in place to allow access to up-to-date local authority data required for the LDP evidence reports, East Ayrshire Council is at the very early stages of preparing the evidence report for LDP3 (LDP2 adopted as recently as April 2024), and data requirements/sources are not yet fully mapped out. Internally, the Development Planning Team has good links with the Council's Corporate Support team, which

manages statistical information (population / census) etc. Externally, good links are established with data providers, such as NHS Ayrshire and Arran, NatureScot, Improvement Service and Scottish Wildlife Trust.

As such, and reflecting the current stage of the Local Development Plan, there are good links already in place that will be a good grounding for a more formalised pathway to be put in place to ensure that adequate and up to date data will be available.

The Planning Authority has access to GIS and spatial data with a small team of trained technical support staff helping to run that access. However, the Council is partly constrained by the current provision of GIS, which doesn't take in real time information nor provides development tools for dynamic real time analysis of map data. The Council is actively looking at a more advanced, real time data analysis GIS type system and is in discussions at a corporate level to replace our current system with a more up to date, real time GIS type system to bring this Council into alignment with most other Scottish Council's. Presently the Business case is being developed and a Survey has been issued through HQ engagement to all existing and potential users of the GIS to determine their service requirements.

Our Strategic Lead for Development Planning sits on the Council's Digital Management Board and is on the local government transformation programme led by Solace and the Improvement Service in the cohort looking at creating digital, design and technology-enabled transformation. This means we are at the forefront of conversations around how digital can assist with both financial constraints and facilitating a better service. Over the next year we hope to start to implement change in the service as a result of learning and engagement in these groups.

In respect of other digital tools, the Council makes significant use of a range of tools. In respect of the LDP2 process:

- EAC website was regularly updated and all information on LDP is put online [here](#).
- Issued 'stay connected' updates to residents who we know have an interest in planning related matters
- LDP Proposed Plan consultation was regularly promoted through EAC corporate Facebook and twitter accounts
- Online meetings were offered to communities through the MIR and Proposed Plan consultation periods.
- Online sessions were held with elected members (separated into ward sessions), both in relation to the proposed plan and pre-examination.
- Documents, including for example early notification to our customers of forthcoming discretionary fees charges and revisions to existing charges, bolstered by an email push out to the planning agents and architects that we engage with most, to raise awareness of the changes.