

Report to Partnership Meeting 7 February 2020

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the early engagement being undertaken for the development National Planning Framework 4, discuss regional priorities and also how HITRANS can best support partner organisations input to NPF4.

Background

The NPF is a long term spatial plan for Scotland that sets out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth.

The Scottish Government has started work to prepare the fourth NPF (NPF4) which will look to Scotland in 2050. It will guide spatial development, set out national policies, designate national developments and reflect regional spatial priorities.

The Scottish Government expect NPF4 to look very different from NPF3, with a longer time-horizon, fuller regional coverage and improved alignment with wider programmes and strategies, including on infrastructure and economic investment. In particular, NPF4 will need to align with the outcomes in the National Performance Framework; respond to the shift to inclusive growth; improve health and well-being for the people of Scotland, improve equalities and eliminate discrimination; provide a spatial planning response to the Global climate emergency; provide a renewed focus on rural development including rural repopulation; and give a stronger steer on housing delivery and diversification including the setting of targets on land for housing.

NPF4 will for the first time incorporate Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and will take on enhanced status as part of the statutory development plan. Research on the operation and effectiveness of the current SPP will be published shortly.

NPF4 will also take into account regional spatial strategies which will be prepared by local authorities.

Scottish Government Update on National Planning Framework 4

Work on the preparation of Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) is now underway and we have identified your organisation as one who may have an interest.

NPF4 will be a long term plan for Scotland setting out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. Forming part of the development plan, it will be key in day-to-day decisions at all levels of planning in Scotland. Further information about the NPF and the timetable for review is available on our website at <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/what-is-the-national-planning-framework/>

As you may have an interest in the NPF4, we wanted to highlight to you that our early engagement period is now underway. Our Programme for Engagement highlights the package of engagement opportunities over the coming months to help gather ideas to inform the draft NPF4, which we will publish for consultation in September 2020.

This early engagement programme provides people an opportunity to set out their aspirations for a future Scotland, and set out how the planning system can help deliver those aspirations. To make sure you, your networks or people that you represent can keep up-to-date and stay involved, we will be using our website www.transformingplanning.scot as a hub for essential information and opportunities. Over the next few weeks we will publish dates and booking details for the Scotplan 2050 Roadshow; details of our community grant scheme; more information about national developments; and background information notes on Scottish Planning Policy topics.

We have also opened a Call for Ideas – we want to hear from you about your priorities for NPF4. We are inviting any comments within the scope of the NPF by 31 March. We have posed 5 questions and some prompts to get you started; but please note that they are just there as a guide to help stimulate debate, not as formal consultation questions. You can find more information at www.transformingplanning.scot

The 5 questions together with further prompts are listed below

1. What development will we need to address climate change?

Think about:

- What we will need to do to reach the target of net zero emissions by 2045.
- The opportunities that this could provide to support jobs and the economy.
- How places can be made more resilient to the long term impacts of climate change.
- What climate change-friendly places might look like in the future.

2. How can planning best support our quality of life, health and wellbeing in the future?

Think about:

- Where we might want to live in 2050.
- How many and what types of homes we will need.
- How we can encourage more people to live in rural Scotland.
- Whether we could target development to address longstanding differences in health and quality of life.
- Whether and where we might need new settlements, and regeneration of existing communities.
- How places could be more inclusive, diverse, creative, vibrant, safe, resilient and empowering.

3. What does planning need to do to enable development & investment in our economy to benefit everyone?

Think about:

- What our economy might look like in 2050.
- How planning can anticipate and respond to the economic challenges of Brexit.
- What the key sectors might be and what infrastructure they may need to support them.
- How planning could stimulate and distribute growth.
- What type, scale and distribution of business and industrial land and premises will be needed.
- Where significant investment sites might be.
- How economic opportunities could improve, or be accessible from, places where deprivation is concentrated.

4. How can planning improve, protect and strengthen the special character of our places?

Think about:

- What special places will need protection in the future.
- What the future might be for our rural, coastal and island communities.
- How we could unlock the potential of vacant and derelict land.
- What our city and town centres might look like in the future.
- Whether we need to think about the concept of green belts.
- How we can get the most out of our productive land.
- How we can protect and restore peatland.
- How we can plan blue and green infrastructure.
- How we can strengthen the character and heritage of our many different places.

5. What infrastructure do we need to plan and build to realise our long term aspirations?

Think about:

- What infrastructure we will need in the future.
- How we can make better use of existing infrastructure capacity, including through innovation.
- Where transport connections will be needed to support future development.
- Where our international gateways, hubs and links will be in a post-Brexit world.
- How we can sustain our lifelines.
- How digital connectivity could change the way we live and work.
- Where our natural resources for energy are.
- What emerging and future technologies we will need to plan for

Priorities for HITRANS Area

The overarching ambition and priorities which the Scottish Government sets out for NPF4 are welcome including the following; *fuller regional coverage and improved alignment with wider programmes and strategies, including on infrastructure and economic investment; need to align with the outcomes in the National Performance Framework; respond to the shift to inclusive growth; improve health and well-being for the people of Scotland, improve equalities; provide a spatial planning response to the Global climate emergency; and provide a renewed focus on rural development including rural repopulation.*

In responding, HITRANS will seek to develop several of the key themes and priorities which the Partnership has advanced in updating the Regional Transport Strategy and through recent responses to consultations such as the National Transport Strategy and Infrastructure Commission for Scotland. These include;

- Increase devolution of decision making, budget and resourcing of strategic transport governance and operation to a regional and / or local level.
- Exploit opportunity to island proof NPF4 by supporting the development of ambitious Low Carbon Island Connectivity Plans which seek to ensure that digital, energy and transport connectivity within and to our islands is coordinated to deliver an effective response to the climate emergency whilst also tackling rural depopulation, development and Inclusive Growth.
- Multi modal investment in the strategic transport corridors on which all our people and freight into and from our region depends. Embedding hydrogen, electric and Connected and Autonomous Vehicle CAV infrastructure and services at the heart of these

improvements to ensure that the improved connectivity the regions economy can be achieved through carbon neutral solutions

- Adopt and integrated approach to improving Active Travel in the region through investment in Masterplan priorities in and around the main urban settlements while also upgrading and expanding the strategic active travel network in the Highlands and Islands that will deliver improved local sustainable travel choices but also capitalise on the huge opportunity for the region to be at the forefront of significant growth in the cycle tourism sector. This requires existing sections of the National Cycle Network to be fit for purpose and for the establishment of a suitable Route to the Isles as identified in the Regional Transport Strategy.
- Ensure the regions key transport interchanges remain fit for purpose and able to offer a suitable gateway into and from the region for the growing numbers using them. This requires investment and delivery of masterplans at Inverness Airport, Bus and Rail Stations and a multi modal interchange in Oban.
- The Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund has enabled welcome investment at a number of high profile attractions which have been impacted by the recent significant growth in visitor numbers. However, an integrated approach is needed to managing tourism growth is required to ensure that there is less dependence on the private car than at present and the areas wider transport infrastructure is brought up to a suitable standard.

Members are invited to:

1. note the report.
2. consider the transport related regional priorities highlighted in the report and delegate responsibility to HITRANS Partnership Director to work with colleagues within partner Local Authorities in responding to the Early Engagement on the National Planning Framework 4.

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Date: 27th January 2020