



Glasgow City Council

**Net Zero and Climate Monitoring
City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive
Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

Contact: Sarah Shaw

Ext: 76066

Update on National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the Scottish Parliament's recent adoption of National Planning Framework 4, with specific reference to Sustainability and Net Zero.

Recommendations:

To note the content of the report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall a [report on Draft NPF4](#) brought to Committee in March 2022. This highlighted the Scottish Government's publication of Draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Council's Response.
- 1.2 Revised NPF4 was laid in Scottish Parliament on November 8th, 2022, and adopted by Scottish Ministers on the 13th of February 2023. From this date, NPF4 replaces National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy. The statutory development plan now consists of the National Planning Framework and the relevant Local Development Plan (LDP). In practice this means that NPF4 will be used alongside the City Development Plan to make planning decisions in Glasgow.
- 1.3 A full updated report on NPF4 will be reported to NHTR Committee on 30 May. The following report notes and considers those policies with the most immediate reference to Net Zero aims and objectives.

2 Revised NPF4

- 2.1 National Planning Framework 4 [NPF4](#) is a long-term plan which sets out an approach to planning and development that will help to achieve a net zero, sustainable Scotland by 2045.
- 2.2 Adopted NPF4 has 3 parts:
- Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045
 - Part 2 – National Planning Policy
 - Part 3 – Annexes

Part 1 - National Spatial Strategy for Scotland to 2045

- 2.3 The 6 Spatial Principles have been retained from the Draft but have been tightened and cross-referenced. They remain:

1. **Just Transition** – empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.
2. **Conserving and Recycling Assets** – make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure, and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.
3. **Local Living** – Support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work, and leisure locally.
4. **Compact Urban Growth** – Limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure, and biodiversity.
5. **Rebalanced Development** – target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.
6. **Rural Revitalisation** – target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.

Glasgow City remains in the ‘Central’ area where Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans should:

- Deliver **sustainable places** by supporting net zero solutions, including extended heat networks and improved energy efficiency along with urban greening and low carbon transport.
- Deliver **liveable places** by pioneering low carbon, resilient urban living by rolling out networks of 20-minute neighbourhoods, future proofing city and town centres, accelerating urban greening, investing in net zero homes, and supporting a compact city model.
- Deliver **productive places** by targeting economic investment and build community wealth to overcome disadvantage and support a greener wellbeing economy.

National Developments

2.4 There are 18 National Developments that have been categorised under three themes. There are a number of Scotland wide National Developments including, *National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling, Digital Fibre Network, Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, and Circular Economy Materials Management Facilities*. The National Developments specifically in Glasgow City and Region are as follows:

Sustainable Places	Liveable Places	Productive Places
Urban mass/rapid transit infrastructure, ‘Glasgow Metro’	Central Scotland Green Network	High Speed Rail
Urban Sustainable Blue and Green Drainage Solutions		Clyde Mission

2.5 Conferring national development status to the above projects means that the principle of a development does not require to be agreed at the consenting stage. However, planning permission and relevant consents will still be required. There are also implications for procedures to process Major planning applications.

2.6 NPF4 intends the National Developments to be “examples of the Place Principle and placemaking approaches” as well as contributing “to addressing the global climate emergency and nature crisis, community wealth building and just transition will be of particular importance.”.

3. Part 2 - National Planning Policy

3.1 National Planning Policy contains 33 policies that are divided into three sections: Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places. The subject policies cover actions for preparing Local Development Plans as well as detailed policies for decision-making in the development management process.

3.2 There 33 subject specific policies are as follows: those of specific interest in the Net Zero (Glasgow) context have been highlighted below:

Sustainable Places	
1.	Tackling the climate and nature crises
2.	Climate mitigation and adaptation
3.	Biodiversity
4.	Natural places
5.	Soils
6.	Forestry, woodland, and trees
7.	Historic assets and places
8.	Green belts
9.	Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
10.	Coastal development
11.	Energy
12.	Zero waste
13.	Sustainable transport
Liveable Places	
14.	Design, quality, and place
15.	Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods
16.	Quality homes
17.	Rural homes
18.	Infrastructure first
19.	Heat and cooling
20.	Blue and green infrastructure
21.	Play, recreation and sport
22.	Flood risk and water management
23.	Health and Safety
24.	Digital infrastructure
Productive Places	

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 25. | Community wealth building |
| 26. | Business and industry |
| 27. | City, town, local and commercial centres |
| 28. | Retail |
| 29. | Rural development |
| 30. | Tourism |
| 31. | Culture and creativity |
| 32. | Aquaculture |
| 33. | Minerals |

3.3 There are 4 new thematic policies not featured in the City Development Plan:

- Policy 1 Climate and Nature Crisis
- Policy 2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
- Policy 25 Community Wealth Building, and
- Policy 31 Culture and Creativity

Some of the policies with particular significance to Net Zero and the City's climate commitments are discussed below.

3.4 It is noted that Policy 1, Climate and Nature Crisis is the sole policy to carry 'significant weight' in planning decisions. All the other policies need to be part of a balanced approach in considering proposed developments. The practical application of these policies is now being explored by the planning team in Glasgow and in collaboration with planning authorities across Scotland.

3.5 With particular reference to Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation: The policy states that development should seek to minimise greenhouse gas emissions in terms of site and design, and encourages retrofit. The City Council planning service is considering a variety of options which take into account whole life greenhouse gas emissions and carbon balance across new developments. This includes, for each site, assessment of the relative benefits of retention and adaptation of existing buildings, including their embedded carbon, compared to new build. This includes the operation of the building over the long term, and linked greenhouse gas emissions. Some buildings also have structural concerns which makes their retention unviable. Linked to this, Policy 12 of NPF4 states that development proposals will be supported which, as well as minimising demolition, salvage materials for reuse. If demolition is the outcome which is supported, after full assessment, a statement as to how demolition will be managed and materials re-used where possible, is now expected as part of major redevelopments.

3.6 Policy 3 Biodiversity: this emphasises the importance of biodiversity by requiring development to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity and nature networks to show that these are in a better state than they would be without intervention. In England, the approach to delivering biodiversity enhancement through new development is referred to as "biodiversity net gain" (BNG) with a specific metric having been developed to calculate this. Through policy 3, the Scottish Government has taken a different approach to the delivery of biodiversity enhancement, which varies with the scale of development proposed. For non-householder local applications, the Scottish Government has worked with naturescot to provide further guidance on the appropriate measures that can be used to deliver enhancement, though it includes no targets for doing so nor a metric to determine how this should

be calculated. National and major developments are expected to, amongst other things, deliver significant biodiversity enhancements and demonstrate that the proposal will enhance biodiversity so that it is in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. However, whilst the policy states that best practice assessment methods should be used for this purpose, no accompanying guidance has been prepared. In the absence of such guidance, further thought is being given as to how we can influence the implementation of this policy in practice, including whether the BNG approach used in England might constitute the best practice method available at this point in time for national and major developments.

- 3.7 Policies 20: Blue and green infrastructure and 21: Play, recreation and sport aim to ensure that communities benefit from accessible, high quality blue, green and civic spaces and that natural and built environments are improved, with more equitable access to opportunities for play and recreation. In Glasgow we are looking to update our existing Interim Supplementary Guidance on Green Belt and Green Network (IPG6) and on Delivering Development (IPG12) to reflect the ambitions of the Open Space Strategy, including how communities can benefit from access to good quality, multifunctional public open spaces that provide opportunities for play, rest and relaxation, informal sport and engaging with nature. Updated guidance will set out how we expect new residential development to contribute to the delivery of new/enhancement of existing open spaces for this purpose. This will be presented to Committee before formal external consultation, probably early in 2024.

4. Part 3 – Annexes

Regional Spatial Strategies

- 4.1 The role of the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) is to spatially coordinate activities and guide delivery at scale and across authority boundaries. The focus of Glasgow City Region's published indicative Regional Spatial Strategy is on the Clyde Corridor/ Mission Clyde as well as other key spatial priorities to deliver a 'compact city model'.

5. Next steps

- 5.1. In addition to the business of adopting NPF4, The Scottish Government have laid regulations in Scottish Parliament to support new Local Development Plans. These can be read [here](#).
- 5.2. Planning applications are now being determined taking account of the requirements of NPF4 including items going to the Planning Applications Committee.
- 5.3. The evidence base for interpretation and application of NPF4 in decision making will come from GCC strategies both existing and in preparation, such as the Climate Plan, the Biodiversity Action Plan, the Forestry and Woodland Strategy and also any guidance produced by or with Scottish Government.

6 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: GCC may require to fund defence of legal challenges to planning decisions made

Legal: See above

Personnel: There are resource implications for the Council to provide appropriate technical support for planning policy and decision making for the new policy areas in NPF4

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 1: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities. Mission 3, 4
Grand Challenge 2: Increase Opportunity and Prosperity for all our Citizens. Mission 1, 2
Grand Challenge 3: Fight the Climate Emergency in a Just Transition to Net Zero. Mission 1, 2
Grand Challenge 4: Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, Innovative, and efficient way for our communities: Mission 1

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. Not applicable

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? Not applicable

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. Yes. NPF4, through its spatial strategy, national developments, national policies and delivery programme seeks to promote the long-term public interest by creating successful places across the country.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: Yes. Actions, 35, 36, 47, 51, 56, 58, and 59.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? NPF4, through its national developments and national policies and delivery programme should have a positive climate impact for Glasgow.

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? Yes.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report: No

7 Recommendations

To note the contents of the report.