



Glasgow City Council

Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration City
Policy Committee

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Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

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Item 4

30th May 2023

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.

Recommendations:

To note the adoption of NPF4 by Scottish Ministers on 13th February 2023 and note current planning policy position and implications.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

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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. The government consultation closed on March 31st, 2022 and received a total of 761 responses. There were 539 responses from organisations and 222 from individuals. An explanatory note was produced that lays out the content of the consultation, the representations made and the changes to Revised NPF4. The report can be read in its entirety here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nationalplanning-framework-4-explanatory-report/documents/>
- 1.2 NPF4 constitutes the national spatial strategy for Scotland, and sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. 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.

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 Approved NPF4 has three revised themes. The fourth theme from Draft NPF4, *Distinctive Places*, has been incorporated into the remaining themes, *Sustainable Places*, *Liveable Places* and *Productive Places*. This was done to align the themes more closely to the three pillars of sustainable development: environment, social, economy.
- 2.4 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.

The 5 Action Areas for Scotland have been retained but renamed *Regional Spatial Priorities* with a focus on context, challenges, priorities, and delivery. 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.

2.5 Members should be aware that NPF4 Supersedes NPF3 and all previous Scottish Planning Policy. Furthermore, Strategic Development Plans cease to have affect and are no longer part of the Development Plan.

National Developments

2.6 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

2.7 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.

2.8 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.” The Scottish Government has committed to create delivery templates for the national developments. Work to create case study templates has already been undertaken by Scottish Futures Trust with stakeholders from Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Urban Drainage Solutions and Clyde Mission.

2.9 NPF4 states that, “local development plans should take forward proposals for national developments where relevant and facilitate their delivery. This could be through supporting land allocations, policy intervention and LDP delivery programmes.”

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:

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

3.4 It is noted that Policy 1, Climate and Nature Crisis is the sole policy to carry ‘significant weight’ in planning decisions. The remaining 32 policies are to be considered on balance in making planning decisions. The Scottish Government Chief Planner has formally confirmed that all policies should be taken into account as a whole and that conflicts between policies are to be expected; so it is for the planning authority to consider and balance the weight given to individual policies in specific cases.

3.5 The policies in section 3.3 introduce new considerations for our decision making. These and their technical requirements will require up-skilling for all users of the planning system. Specialist knowledge may be available in other parts of NRS and the wider Council family to support the delivery of the new planning system. This will require new ways of internal collaborative working to ensure that relevant expertise is utilised in decision making.

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'.
- 4.2 Further work to formalise Glasgow City Region's indicative regional spatial strategies is expected to begin once statutory guidance is in place. This is expected between 2024-2028. Work to progress new LDPs will not be contingent on RSS being under preparation or in place. It should be noted that Clydeplan, the Strategic Development Plan for the Glasgow City Region planning authorities, now no longer has any status.

Housing

- 4.3 Local Authorities in Scotland were asked to supply a 10-year minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) in the preparation of Draft NPF4. The Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership undertook the process of establishing the MATHLR in Glasgow and the City Region. The figure for Glasgow City Council stands at **21,350 homes**. This was calculated using household projections, existing housing need, and 25% flexibility contingency for sites coming forward. The Scottish Government reminds local authorities that this is a minimum and should plan to exceed this figure. Sites will need to be allocated in the new City Development Plan and existing land allocations in the existing City Development Plan are still valid.

Delivery Programme

- 4.3 The Scottish Government published the NPF4 Delivery Programme alongside Revised NPF4. The Delivery Programme includes sections on governance, delivery mechanisms, infrastructure funding and finance, skills, resources, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- 4.4 Generally, the Delivery Programme seeks to enhance delivery through existing planning powers such as through planning obligations, compulsory purchase, permitted development rights and the use of masterplan consent areas, previously known as simplified planning zones. The Scottish Government has committed to taking forward reform of compulsory purchase powers by setting up an advisory group.
- 4.5 In terms of funding, existing programmes of investment have been identified to progress the objectives of NPF4. These include:
- Place Based Investment Fund
 - Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme
 - Strategic Transport Funding
 - Affordable Housing Supply
 - City Regional Deals

There is no statutory requirement for the Scottish Government to prepare a delivery programme for NPF4. The Scottish Government has stated that an update to the delivery programme will be provided 6 months from NPF4 adoption (July 2023) and on an annual basis thereafter.

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](#). The regulations are subject to Parliamentary Scrutiny and are due to come into force on the 19th of May 2023. The Development Plan team has so far been working to the draft Development Planning regulations which were published for [consultation in December 2021](#) as well as Draft NPF4/Revised NPF4. As and when the Development Planning regulations come into force, the Development Plan team will finalise the work programme for producing City Development Plan 2. This will form part of the forthcoming Development Plan Scheme 2023-2024 which is will be reported to Committee in Autumn 2023.
- 5.2 Planning applications are now being determined taking account of the requirements of NPF4 including items going to the Planning Applications Committee. The Scottish Government acknowledges it will take time for the new system to settle in and reminds decision makers to take account of the overall intent of NPF4 and application of careful planning judgement when taking account of cross-cutting policies. This will require a need for careful, well-considered decision making and an awareness of risks to the council (financial, time, reputational) of potentially challengeable decisions. Direction on contentious or particularly technical issues will also come in time from the Courts or Reporter's appeal decisions throughout Scotland. Heads of Planning Scotland is also working on providing shared advice to benchmark different planning authorities' experience with the new policies.
- 5.3 We are allowed to produce new supplementary guidance related to our existing development plan for up to 2 years after the adoption of NPF4. We are reviewing our existing interim policy guidance, which has not yet been formally adopted, and may bring forward some of this for formal adoption ahead of the new City Development Plan.
- 5.4 In the event of incompatibility between terms of NPF4 and adopted LDP, whichever of them is the latter is to prevail.

6 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	GCC may require to fund defence of legal challenges to planning decisions made
<i>Legal:</i>	See above
<i>Personnel:</i>	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 adoption of NPF4 by Scottish Ministers on 13th February 2023 and note current planning policy position and implications.