

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee  
Tuesday 14 May 2024  
15th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

## National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Annual Update

### Introduction

1. [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) was adopted by Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023, following its unanimous approval by the Scottish Parliament on 11 January 2023. The Committee agreed that it would review on an annual basis whether NPF4 was achieving its intended ambitions. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to help inform the Committee's evidence session with key stakeholders looking at the National Planning Framework 4 a year on from its adoption.
2. The Committee will take evidence from two panels:

#### Panel 1 (Local authorities)

- Ian Aikman, Chair, Heads of Planning Scotland
- David Givan, Chief Planning Officer, City of Edinburgh Council
- Mairi Maciver, Development Planning Manager, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Morag Ferguson, Planning Manager, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

#### Panel 2 (Climate and Nature Emergency)

- Clare Daly, Head of Policy and Communications at Sustrans, Climate Emergency Response Group
- Esme Clelland, Senior Conservation Planner RSPB and Convener of the Scottish Environment Link Planning Group, Scottish Environment Link
- Morag Watson, Director of Onshore, Scottish Renewables
- Claire Symonds, Chair, Planning Democracy

3. This is the second of three evidence sessions looking at NPF4. The sessions will conclude with a session with the Scottish Government.
4. Although no written evidence has been received by the witnesses participating in this session, the following written evidence has been received:

[A submission from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks \(SSEN\)](#)

[A submission from Coastal Communities Network, Scotland](#)

[A submission from the John Muir Trust](#)

## Background

5. NPF4 is a long-term plan looking to 2045 that guides spatial development, sets out national planning policies, designates national developments and highlights regional spatial priorities.
6. The key sections of the adopted NPF4 are:
  - **National Spatial Strategy:** The national spatial strategy guides decisions on future development across Scotland, which aims to produce:
    - **Sustainable places**, which reduce emissions and restore and better connect biodiversity.
    - **Liveable places**, where people can live better, healthier lives.
    - **Productive places**, which produce a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.
  - The National Spatial Strategy is underpinned by six spatial principles for Scotland in 2045, these are a just transition, conserving and recycling assets, local living, compact urban growth, rebalanced development, and rural revitalisation. It also recognises the different challenges and opportunities across Scotland’s regions, which are described in five geographic “regional spatial priorities”.
  - **National Developments:** There are 18 national developments, which support the delivery of the National Spatial Strategy, these range from significant infrastructure projects such as the development of urban mass/rapid transit systems in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, to the continued expansion of the Central Scotland Green Network.
  - **National Planning Policy:** NPF4 sets out 33 national planning policies, covering areas such as climate change, biodiversity, play, flood risk and other major land use policy matters.
  - **Minimum All-tenure Housing Land Requirements:** This section sets out the minimum number of housing units that local, city-region and national park authorities must plan, as a minimum, to accommodate in future development plans. The Scottish Government has provided an explanatory report of how the MATHLR has been calculated, which can be accessed at the following link:

[Scotland 2045 - fourth National Planning Framework - draft housing land requirement: explanatory report](#)

7. The Committee took evidence on the draft NPF4 before it was approved by the Parliament and produced the following two reports:
  - [Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee Report on the draft NPF4, published 30 March 2022](#)
  - [Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee Report on the revised draft NPF4, published on 21 December 2022](#)

## **Conclusion**

8. The Committee is invited to consider the above information in its evidence session on NPF4.

**Clerks to the Committee  
May 2024**