



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Scottish Planning Policy 2014

Paragraph 15 confirms that the important role of planning in promoting strong, resilient and inclusive communities as part of successful, sustainable places. This paragraph also highlights how delivering high quality buildings, infrastructure and spaces in the right location helps provide choice over where to live and style of home, choice as to how to access amenities and choices to live more active, engaged, independent and healthy lifestyles.

Paragraph 58 applies the town centre first policy to community and cultural facilities whilst paragraph 68 recognises the importance of adopting a flexible and realistic approach to community, education and healthcare facilities so they are easily accessible to the communities that they are intended to serve.

What has changed since 2014?

- Increased recognition of the contribution that community facilities make to creating viable and sustainable places that foster a sense of community which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities.
- The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provides new provisions for the preparation of local place plans giving communities a greater say in what will be done in their communities, including the provision of community facilities.
- The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 includes the capacity of education and health services as topic on which Ministers may seek further information on from planning authorities and the spatial strategy of local development plans prepared by planning authorities must account for those matters as well.
- The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 includes provisions that planning permission may only be granted for certain large public access developments if it is subject to a condition requiring provision of changing places toilet.
- The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 includes six outcomes that the National Planning Framework should contribute towards, including increasing the population of rural areas and improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland.
- In March 2019 a joint ministerial letter was sent to Local Authority Chief Executives and Health Board Chief Executives about decisions on development not routinely factoring in consequent pressure on GP practices in an area and encouraged greater involvement of GP practices in the preparation of local development plans.
- Minimum distance requirement for siting crematoriums near housing revoked on 4 April 2019 under The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016.

- Ironside Farrar research recommended that NPF should consider the inclusion of policies on the provision of cemeteries/crematoria. The research identifies four Councils that have local policies in place - Angus Council safeguards land for cemetery use; North Ayrshire Council's supports proposals for cemetery provision that meet identified need; Scottish Borders Council sets out criteria for considering planning applications for crematoria; and Perth and Kinross Council confirms that new cemetery provision may be considered as essential infrastructure that is acceptable within Green Belts.
- This paper considers how best to deliver communal buildings that contribute to sustainable and healthy communities, such as (but not limited to) healthcare, leisure, education, community centres, cemeteries and public art. "Green" leisure facilities such as playing fields and allotments are considered elsewhere.

Proposed key objective of NPF4: To promote and support the provision of accessible community facilities where a need has been identified in local development plans.

Issues to consider:

- How can we ensure that the impacts of new development on existing community facilities are addressed in plans and decisions?
- How can we ensure that the planning system makes appropriate provision for community facilities, including the retention of existing facilities?
- Are there particular community facilities which the planning system should be prioritising the provision or safeguarding of?
- Should the planning system be managing the delivery of development to coincide with a certain level of community facility availability – or restricting development occupation until the level of community facility availability is in place? How can that be balanced with development aspirations and the capital investment programmes of particular service providers?
- How should a spatial strategy which contributes to increasing the population of rural Scotland ensure that population increase can be matched with sustainable provision of community facilities?
- What should the standards or requirements be for provision of different types of infrastructure e.g. education and healthcare facilities?
- How should the planning system help to ensure community facilities are resilient to the impacts of climate change and that new development contributes to needed or aligns with already in-place climate adaptation measures?
- Can NPF4 do more to promote Changing Places Toilets to encourage adequate provision and distribution of facilities in areas where they are most needed?
- Is there a need for a national planning policy on cemeteries and crematoria?

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