



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

**PLACEMAKING**

*Scottish Planning Policy (2014):*

*Placemaking is identified as a Principal Policy confirming that design and placemaking principles are overarching and should be applied to all development. The following key policy principles are identified:*

***Planning should take every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach.*** This means taking a holistic approach that responds to and enhances the existing place while balancing the costs and benefits of potential opportunities over the long term. The design-led approach should be applied in local development plans and at site and individual building level within master plans that respond to how people use public spaces.

***Planning should direct the right development to the right place.*** This requires spatial strategies within development plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area. To do this decisions should be guided by the following policy principles:

- *optimising the use of existing resource capacities, particularly by co-ordinating housing and business development with infrastructure investment including transport, education facilities, water and drainage, energy, heat networks and digital infrastructure;*
- *using land within or adjacent to settlements for a mix of uses. This will also support the creation of more compact, higher density, accessible and more vibrant cores;*
- *considering the re-use or re-development of brownfield land before new development takes place on greenfield sites;*
- *considering whether the permanent, temporary or advanced greening of all or some of a site could make a valuable contribution to green and open space networks, particularly where it is unlikely to be developed for some time, or is unsuitable for development due to its location or viability issues; and*
- *locating development where investment in growth or improvement would have most benefit for the amenity of local people and the vitality of the local economy.*

***Planning should support development that is designed to a high-quality, which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place*** – distinctive; safe and pleasant; welcoming; adaptable; resource efficient; and easy to move around and beyond.

*Planning should adopt a consistent and relevant approach to the assessment of design and place quality such as that set out in the Scottish Government Place Standard.*

***Development planning*** should be based on spatial strategies that are deliverable, taking into account the scale and type of development pressure and the need for growth and regeneration. An urban capacity study, which assesses the scope for development within settlement boundaries, may usefully inform the spatial strategy, and local authorities should make use of land assembly, including the use of compulsory purchase powers

where appropriate. Early discussion should take place between local authorities, developers and relevant agencies to ensure that investment in necessary new infrastructure is addressed in a timely manner.

The creation of a new settlement may occasionally be a necessary part of a spatial strategy, where it is justified either by the scale and nature of the housing land requirement and the existence of major constraints to the further growth of existing settlements, or by its essential role in promoting regeneration or rural development.

Where a development plan spatial strategy indicates that a new settlement is appropriate, it should specify its scale and location, and supporting infrastructure requirements, particularly where these are integral to the viability and deliverability of the proposed development. Supplementary guidance can address more detailed issues such as design and delivery.

Local development plans should contribute to high-quality places by setting out how they will embed a design-led approach. This should include:

- reference to the six qualities of successful places which enable consideration of each place as distinctly different from other places and which should be evident in all development;
- using processes that harness and utilise the knowledge of communities and encourage active participation to deliver places with local integrity and relevance; and
- specifying when design tools, such as those highlighted, should be used.

Design is a material consideration in **development management**. Planning permission may be refused and the refusal defended at appeal or local review solely on design grounds.

## What has changed since 2014

- “Meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people” is included as an NPF4 outcome in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.
- Provisions in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 for Masterplan Consent Areas and Local Place Plans are intended to act as positive, proactive tools that can support placemaking.
- Roll-out of the Place Standard Tool<sup>1</sup>.
- Research undertaken by Ironside Farrar on the adoption of Scottish Planning Policy in local development plans<sup>2</sup> found that the existing policy was considered to work best for plan making purposes and is considered practical for development management as it ensures that design is represented as a material consideration. It was, however, considered unclear what parts of the policy are statements or guidance. The research recommends that placemaking should be at the forefront of development and that NPF should be more prescriptive to ensure that placemaking principles are carried through to development management. It was recommended that pressure to meet housing targets should not compromise the ability to deliver high quality design and local context should be considered to ensure new developments respond appropriately to the surrounding area.

<sup>1</sup> [Place Standard Tool](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Adoption of Scottish planning policy in local development plans](#)

- There has been some political debate on the need for new towns in Scotland, as well as local experience gained from the creation of significant new neighbourhoods and settlements.
- Adoption of the Place Principle<sup>3</sup> by Scottish Government and COSLA
- Implementation of the Charrette Mainstreaming Programme and Making Places Initiative, supporting over 100 participative design and placemaking events across Scotland.

**Proposed key objective of NPF4:** To deliver sustainable, well-designed places and homes that meet the needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people. This will be done through a design-led approach which demonstrates the six qualities of successful places.

### Issues to consider

- Does this policy need to change – if so, in what way?
- What is the most effective way for NPF4 to give high level support for placemaking principles that integrate with other policy documents, such as *Creating Places: a policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland*?
- How can national planning policies best support the delivery of existing core placemaking policies in development management whilst recognising the need for local flexibility?
- How can placemaking policies support other policies, such as housing and green infrastructure, to meet the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people?
- Does the climate change emergency mean that the policy needs strengthening or revision?
- Is there scope to make more of this policy area in order to encourage planning to actively enable the delivery of high quality development?

## Get Involved

For more information and other resources



[www.transformingplanning.scot](http://www.transformingplanning.scot)



<https://blogs.gov.scot/planning-architecture/>

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<sup>3</sup> [Place Principle](#)



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