



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Scottish Planning Policy (2014):

*The **planning system** should address the development requirements of businesses and enable key opportunities for investment to be realised. It can support sustainable economic growth by providing a positive policy context for development that delivers economic benefits.*

***Development plans** should align with relevant local economic strategies and recognise the key sectors for growth in Scotland, including:*

- Energy;
- Life Sciences, universities and the creative industries;
- Tourism and the food and drink sector;
- Financial and business services.

Plans should encourage home-working & community hubs.

Plans should support integrating energy efficiency and waste innovations within business environments.

SDPs should identify appropriate locations to cluster business.

LDPs should allocate a range of sites for business, taking account of current market demand; location, size, quality and infrastructure requirements; whether sites are serviced or serviceable within five years; the potential for a mix of uses; their accessibility to transport networks by walking, cycling and public transport and their integration with and access to existing transport networks.

Business land audits should be undertaken and inform development plans.

New sites should be informed by the success/failure of existing sites based on market needs and expectations (i.e., business to be located elsewhere due to high vacancy rates).

Plans should locate development which generates significant freight movements at appropriate and accessible locations.

LDPs should allocate a range of sites that meets the demand of the current market and are accessible.

Planning decisions should give due weight to net economic benefit of proposed development.

Supporting information regarding the number of jobs created/transport requirements/noise impact etc. should be provided with the planning application to assess viability.

Proposals for business, industrial and service uses should take into account surrounding sensitive uses, areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest and local amenity, and make a positive contribution towards placemaking.

What has changed since 2014?

- Publication of Scottish Government's Economic Strategy¹ in 2015.
- Publication of draft advice in support of Scottish Planning Policy on giving due weight to net economic benefit in 2015.
- The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework confirms a core purpose of focussing on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- The Scottish Government's Economic Action Plan² sets out a number of new and existing actions that will work together to build a strong, vibrant and diverse economy that promotes wellbeing and attracts investment.
- Research undertaken by Ironside Farrar on the adoption of Scottish Planning Policy in local development plans³ suggests policies work well for plan making purposes as they set out detailed requirements on how to allocate business land. For development management purposes the policy was considered non-contentious and allows decisions to be made that consider wider social and economic implications. Very few thought the policy to be unclear or difficult to apply although it was felt that local flexibility is required due to differing economic strategies and disparity across the country.
- City and Regional Growth Deals and the Enterprise and Skills Review provide a different context for economic development, particularly at a regional scale.
- The Scottish Government published research⁴ into how planning can support the economy, and how the economy can support creating great places.
- The Programme for Government in September 2015 announced the decision to extend the timescale for all existing Enterprise Areas by three years to March 2020. A recently completed Scottish Enterprise-led evaluation of Scotland's Enterprise Areas will help to inform the evolution of this policy.
- Research by Ryden (May 2019) for Scottish Futures Trust on 'Assessing Demand for Commercial Development' concluded that need and demand analysis is not undertaken comprehensively, consistently or in a coordinated fashion and shortcomings are evident across spatial scales.

Proposed key objectives of NPF4: To promote business and industrial development that support sustainable and inclusive economic growth while safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environments.

¹ [Scotland's Economic Strategy](#)

² [Economic Action Plan 2018-20](#)

³ [Adoption of Scottish planning policy in local development plans](#)

⁴ [Planning, Economy, Place](#)

Issues to consider:

- How can we ensure that NPF4 maximising the planning system's contribution to securing sustainable and inclusive economic growth across Scotland?
- How should NPF4 take account of generative opportunities resulting from City and Growth Deals? How can changes to the planning system, including on strategic planning, tie in with the activity of Regional Economic Partnerships?
- How should NPF4 take account of any refreshed Enterprise Areas initiative?
- Do our national planning policies need revisited to reflect our emphasis on inclusive growth?
- How can we link economy and business with place and placemaking considerations, at different scales?
- Given our climate change commitments, what more can NPF4 do to support different patterns of working, for example home-working, as well as integrating energy efficiency and waste innovations within business environments?
- Is there a need to consider how commercial need and demand analysis can be more consistently undertaken?

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