



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

AIR QUALITY

Scottish Planning Policy (2014):

When Paragraph 29 is used for decision making the implications of a proposed development on air quality should be considered when assessing whether a proposal would contribute to sustainable development principles. In practice, this is likely to mean that air quality issues will, in particular, be an important consideration when considering the placemaking agenda and policies around sustainable transport whilst natural environment and green infrastructure policies all contribute to the protection and creation of healthier places.

Elsewhere air quality is highlighted as one of the issues that needs to be addressed when considering mineral extraction proposals and town centre strategies.

What has changed since 2014?

- *Cleaner air for Scotland: the road to a healthier future*¹ published in November 2015, confirms that the Scottish Government will ensure that future updates and revisions to the NPF will take account of its contents.
- *Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy: Independent Review*² published in August 2019 reviews progress of the strategy and recommends next steps. It contains a variety of recommendations that relate to spatial planning and the built environment. It will inform the preparation of the refreshed Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy.
- Introduction of a Low Emission Zone in Glasgow in 2018, with further LEZs to follow in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh by the end of 2020, that are intended to deliver air quality improvements in urban areas.
- *Publication of Delivering Cleaner Air for Scotland in development planning and development management*³ by Environmental Protection Scotland and the Royal Town Planning Institute of Scotland.
- The Scottish Government will publish a new air quality strategy by the end of 2020.
- Air quality is closely related to greenhouse gas emissions and the First Minister declared a Global Climate Change Emergency in April 2019 and revised greenhouse gas emissions targets have been agreed under the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019⁴.

¹ [Cleaner air for Scotland: the road to a healthier future](#)

² [Cleaner air for Scotland: Independent Review](#)

³ [Delivering Cleaner Air For Scotland](#)

⁴ [Climate Change \(Emissions Reductions Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

- *Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland*⁵ commits to consulting on the ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030.

Proposed key objective of NPF4: To ensure that the planning system helps tackle poor air quality and promote good air quality through the promotion of sustainable placemaking and transport links and ensuring that new developments are guided towards appropriate locations.

Issues to consider:

- What policies or changes are needed to ensure air quality is protected and improved? Are transport and placemaking policies currently sufficiently focused on air quality for example?
- Is there a need for more explicit policy statements on air quality to support the Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy? Should these be statements in individual policies on air quality, statements on air quality within other planning policies, or both?
- How can NPF4 best complement existing environmental legislation, strategies and guidance, including that from other national bodies?
- Should the relationship between air quality, green infrastructure and land uses which absorb greenhouse gas emissions be made more explicit in planning policy?
- What planning policies are needed to support the transition to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030?

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⁵ [Protecting Scotland's Future, the Government's Programme for Scotland](#)