

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 THINK PIECE – BLOG – ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE & INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Introduction

Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4), highlighted as a major commitment in response to the climate emergency in the Government's [2019-20 Programme for Scotland](#), is a long-term spatial strategy for Scotland to 2050. It will bring together policies and programmes to enable sustainable and inclusive growth across the country. As a result of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, NPF4 will have enhanced status as part of the statutory development plan. It will guide spatial development, align with infrastructure investment, set out national planning policies, designate national developments and highlight regional spatial priorities.

The Scottish Government is keen to bring together views and ideas from a wide range of sectors and to explore the priorities Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) should address.

In the first in a series of Think Pieces, Dr Martin Valenti, Head of Climate Enterprise with Scottish Enterprise, sets out his thoughts on Scotland2050 and specifically Environmentally Responsible & Inclusive Economic Growth. The opinions expressed are that of the author and we hope that they will stimulate debate and discussion. Think Pieces will be published over the coming weeks.

A personal reflection, 22nd April 2050

Here I am in Scotland aged 89, enjoying a healthy retirement living in the world's first net-zero society. Full credit to Team Scotland, not least the planning system, for getting us there. I wasn't always a fan of the planning system, but I am now. A net-zero society is everything I expected and more.

Looking back, the 3rd September 2019 was a game-changing day for environmentally responsible and inclusive economic growth in Scotland. A fairer economy for all that is as exciting as it is ecologically responsible. Seems so obvious now, but back then not everyone was fully signed up to it.

Today I am celebrating the 80th anniversary of Earth Day with my grandchildren as we drive in the community owned electric vehicle on the self-charging solar powered highway to the Museum of the Combustion Engine. I like to remind myself of the old ways now and again, and to share how far we have come as a society.

As we look out of the window we smile as we pass the Hydrogen station powered by landfill gases from the former tip and interestingly the last remaining of 3971 sites of unproductive land to be transformed from the now redundant vacant & derelict land register. This site is a highly productive community owned geothermal power hub that delivers jobs in the area and has eradicated fuel poverty in the region. I am also proud to say its where my granddaughter works as head of free-energy.

The mobile forest we drive through reminds me of the 2020 Convention of Parties (COP 26) hosted by Glasgow where we told the world what we were going to do by 2045 to become an exemplar net-zero society. From our desire to offset carbon this and hundreds of other native forests sprang up on former industrial vacant and derelict land. This added to the coffers of the national net-zero fund which paid for the community EV's and more.

Back in 2020 we acted on the knowledge that our way of life was consuming earth's natural resources three times faster than they could replenish. Responding to the climate emergency, Scotland's First Minister published a bold programme for Government to address the most profound challenge of our generation - how to live a prosperous life within planetary limits. What needed to change to make this happen?

Clearly the challenges of climate change were complex and the consequences interconnected, so it was critical that Scotland's collective response was aligned otherwise we would have spectacularly failed. As a society, we had to find new ways to thrive and be ready to collaborate to pull our expertise and share our resources. Having such alignment of effort enabled greater and bolder outcomes to be identified, delivered and measured.

Collaboration of this nature required an ambitious and flexible strategic framework and a key enabler for this was NPF4. In 2020 never was the collective appetite greater to bring national, regional and local planning into smarter alignment, and for planning to return to a visionary, suitably resourced profession.

NPF4 helped drive a collaborative, place-based approach to deliver national outcomes with upfront enabling infrastructure. Great places that stood the test of time - affordable, resilient, well-sited low and zero carbon well-served by low carbon infrastructure, making the, once ordinary, extraordinary. A key feature of this particular NPF was the way it is being driven across all sectors of society with communities at the heart of co-designing their areas and by passing control to the people who matter most supported by an aligned & collaborative public sector who got out of the way and great things happened. I call this disruptive but disciplined development and that's exactly what Scotland needed and it helped deliver our ambitions to prosper in harmony with our one planet.

Biography

Dr Martin Valenti is Head of Climate Enterprise with Scottish Enterprise. He is an experienced strategic transformation and business innovator with over 30 years working in a variety of senior leadership roles. Significant skills in shaping and delivering inclusive growth initiatives including project managing major collaborative projects. Successfully delivered high profile projects for the Scottish Government on climate change and a variety of environmental issues.