

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 THINK PIECE – BLOG – CONSULTATION WITH THE SCOTTISH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Introduction

The National Planning Framework (NPF4) team recently undertook consultation with Scotland's young people. Their aim, to understand what young people want Scotland to look like in 2050.

Via the Scottish Youth Parliaments (SYP) #WhatsYourTake survey, and a consultation session with MSYPs at their 70th National Sitting in Fife, they asked young people what they wanted.

#WhatsYourTake

The #WhatsYourTake online survey was open from 27th September until 30th October, gathering 817 responses from young people aged 12-25 across Scotland, from all 32 local authorities, [our 11 national voluntary organisations](#) and various others representing a diverse range of communities of interest and lived experience (including different faiths, disabilities, care and carer experience, LGBTQI+, a range of cadets, sports and environmental clubs, Shelter and Police Scotland Youth Volunteers).

Most respondents are at school (86%) and aged 12-14 (48%) and 15-17 (42%). 55% of respondents are female, 45% were male, 2% identified as non-binary and 1% prefer to use their own term. 16% of respondents belong to minority ethnic groups.

The first question asked young people, via the survey, to choose their three top answers for what they want from Scotland in the future.

Options included:

- Better places to live, work, shop and play
- Improved job opportunities
- Healthier lifestyles
- Reduced carbon footprint
- Better access to natural environments
- Better connections between places and people (e.g. public transport, walking and cycling routes)
- Better green and blue spaces (e.g. open spaces, parks and water environments)
- Other (please specify):

A 'reduced carbon footprint' was preferred the most, with 54% of respondents selecting this option. 'Better places to live, work, shop and play' came next, with 47%, and improved job opportunities with 44%. All options were selected, and 'better access to natural environments' was least preferred with 19%.

Those who selected 'Other' called for:

- Better recycling (facilities) and no litter.

- ‘Better travel: bikes, no cars, electric buses funding by the government and more walking paths all these to be lighted by the sun and solar light in the evening.’
- ‘Improvement of the council housing system.’ More schemes.
- ‘More facilities for sport. e.g. skateparks and pump tracks.’
- Better Wi-Fi.

However, all other suggestions were not traditionally related to planning as we understand it in this consultation:

- Better freedoms, equality and justice across society.
- A less authoritative and more progressive government.
- Less cuts on education. Support for disabilities in schools. Better education on diseases.
- Independence (x3), better relationships with UK and EU.
- Better pay and increased minimum wage. Lower taxes.
- Eradicate child poverty. More money for social welfare.
- Cheaper organic food market.
- No politics.



It is clear from asking this question, young people still place a huge emphasis on the climate emergency. Developing Infrastructure that best places Scotland to reduce its carbon footprint should be a priority. Scotland is a small nation, but it plays a large part in the global climate crisis. If we do not have the necessary infrastructure, means and direction to play our part in preventing climate change, there is no chance we will be able to.

But young people also recognise the high priority that should be placed on improving our places of work, learning, playing and caring. Ensuring that every person, in every aspect of these places are in a modern, safe and dynamic atmosphere.

The second question asked was:

**What should we plan for to make Scotland a better place in 2050? Please rank the following options in order of importance to you.
(1 = most important; 8 = least important)**

Item	Overall Rank
Access to jobs	1

**What should we plan for to make Scotland a better place in 2050? Please rank the following options in order of importance to you.
(1 = most important; 8 = least important)**

Item	Overall Rank
Zero emissions	2
Protected natural environments	3
More high-quality homes in sustainable places	4
Better public transport options	5
More community facilities	6
More walking and cycling routes	7
Repopulate rural areas	8

In the 'Have we missed anything?' comments box, young people said:

- 'Specifically, better access to jobs for those worse off, homeless or struggling to find employment.'
- Sustainable vehicles.
- More alternatives to flying.
- Save the rural areas. 'I think we should keep rural areas rural so that we can experience the lands that earlier generations had.' 'Improve conditions of rural towns.'
- No graffiti.
- Better infrastructure.
- More places for wildlife to thrive.

However, many other suggestions were as before, not traditionally related to planning as we understand it in this consultation. Such as 'keeping mindsets happier', less crime, raising awareness for LGBT and mental health. No smoking. Economic reforms.

We see here that the young people of Scotland want and increase of job opportunities by 2050. Young people are recognising the benefits of employment, aside from an income. They see opportunities to develop themselves, get skills that will serve them well in life such as teamwork and timekeeping. We don't just want money; we want life skills.

Again, the emphasis on our climate is yet again huge. Ranked 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th are all things that are relating to our crumbling climate. Focusing on the reduction of our emissions, protecting our natural spaces, improved sustainable housing and better public transport availability. We young people want nothing but for our country to be protected, and by doing this we need to focus on how we fight climate change, not why. Making it easier to change from fossil fuels to alternative fuels (such as solar panels). Making public transport more accessible and making sure it is servicing as much of Scotland as possible and protecting out natural spaces, not destroying them.

Consultation session – SYP70

At the Scottish Youth Parliaments 70th national sitting, the Scottish government co-facilitated a consultation session with MSYPs from Shetland to Stranraer, Lanark and Kilmarnock (to name a few). Members responded on behalf of their thousands of constituents, and got their voices heard on what Scotland should look like in 2050.

With many of the things discussed at this session, echoing the results of #WhatsYourTake. It was clear that all young people have the same issues close to their heart, and they know exactly the type of place they want Scotland to be in 2050.

One of, if not the, most talked about issue at the consultation session was that of public transport – mainly the urgent need to improve it.

Members shared their frustration that they can rarely just hop on train or bus due to a lack of them, and that even if they could, it would be delayed or cancelled. They discussed the urgent need to improve our train lines, and indeed expand them. Some groups even discussing the expansion of rail to international levels.

Members also discussed ferry lines, and if they are outdated or not. If we can fly for just over an hour from Shetland to Glasgow, then why on earth would we want to get a 14-hour ferry to Aberdeen? Is the possibility of car carrying train lines covering all parts of Scotland the way forward? Or even, is a Scotland free of Cars possible? Can frequent, reliable and cheap (or even free) public transport be the way of the future?

With all these opinions flowing in the room, and in our survey, it is clear there is a lot needing done by 2050. From ensuring we live in a sustainable and environmental country, that is open to everyone, caters for everyone and is meeting the technological standards of its era.

But one thing is certain, young people don't want to sit back and watch. They want to be changing Scotland and changing it for the better.

Author Biography

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