

Dear Sir or Madam,

The current Corona Virus pandemic has prevented me from meeting with groups to provide responses to the NPF 4 consultation as I had planned. Therefore, I have discussed this with 3 of my local groups on social media but have decided to respond as an individual. Please find attached a photo of the form requested (which I could not find a way to do electronically) and my responses to the key questions below.

1 What development will we need to address climate change?

First, net zero by 2045 is quite ambitious by most standards but still it is too late.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that we are very capable of taking draconian action. We actually need to take urgent, drastic action when this is over to address the climate emergency. This could also result in huge mortality rates and a massive refugee crisis to say nothing of possible disorder, even war as the world climate changes and vast areas of the world become deserts or are flooded out of existence among other devastating impacts. What happens to all those people? There will be a humanitarian crisis on this planet that will dwarf Covid-19 according to the now widely accepted scientific modelling. To quote Kennedy, 'If not us, who? If not now, when?' The richest countries in the developed world must take the lead and do so right now.

The development we need to take to address this is for government to invest up front in: retro fitting houses, whether rented or privately owned, with the highest standard of insulation;

fit distributed heating systems to replace gas and oil fired heating and specify this for new developments;

utilise renewables only;

use micro-generation wherever possible;

instal heat pumps using green spaces, old flooded mines, lochs and reservoirs.

All this must be done at scale and with urgency. The optimum package for each locality must be discerned first. This cost can be recovered from placing a levy on energy costs so that we are all contributing. Commerce and industry need to do the same and pay levies until payback is achieved.

All new housing and commercial buildings must meet the highest standards as above. Passive standard must be the ultimate aim - even off grid for all. This can all be phased in and then monies can be recovered in the interim to fund further phases.

Public transport must be taken into public ownership, be much better connected and free to use for all. We need this while we are requiring large numbers of people to move quickly and freely in our urban areas. Free transport will generate income as we free up movement in the economy. Therefore, government will recover investments by indirect means. In rural areas, transport on demand should be considered. All public transport must be fuelled by renewables. At present hydrogen is too costly in terms of energy to produce it so that probably means 100% EV. I have already fed back on the just transition and energy efficient Scotland consultations and recognise that we cannot move to passive standards and EV status across the entire country overnight but the transition must come quicker than planned at present. We must leave as much fossil fuel in the ground as possible. This means a huge investment in EV infrastructure with fast charging points available everywhere.

In order to mitigate disastrous climate impact, we need also to capture carbon. Again old mine workings can be used as well as vast amounts of tree planting and increasing indigenous biodiversity. Aquaculture should also be considered for carbon capture since we are a maritime nation and we have vast amounts of inland water. We must do all we can as a nation to stop deforestation in tropical areas and to reforest on an industrial scale. We must support developing countries to skip straight to the electronic era and avoid fossil fuels. We must support them to utilise renewables.

There is a huge impact from agriculture. We need every area on the planet to be much more self sufficient in food supply, reduce food miles and make significant reductions in meat farming. This will require a huge input in terms of changing our culture but we have to do it. Imaginative use of things like vertical farms can help us provide year round leafy vegetables and exotics in Scotland. There needs to be investment in those. This country could be completely self sufficient in food as could many others.

Air travel must be limited to essentials. This can be done through reducing food miles per above and rationing air travel for leisure as well as taxing it punitively.

There needs to be a huge input to research and development to find environmentally friendly means of transport to replace anything driven by fossil fuels on land, air and sea.

2 How can planning best support our quality of life, health and well being in the future?

Everything outlined above will help support this for everyone in the country and on the planet.

I have already responded to the Artificial Intelligence consultation which could be used to help vast numbers of people work from home and so the population can be more evenly distributed geographically. This may, in time, mean depopulation of cities. However, with the global population increasing exponentially, we'll need more land to produce food. In order to ensure that global hunger is eradicated, we may need to export food for humanitarian reasons rather than purely for profit. Therefore, there will still likely be a huge concentration of people in cities.

In terms of housing, we need to stop having concentrations of low cost, rented homes in what are effectively ghettos. Affordable rented and owner occupied housing should be mixed into housing estates such that they are indistinguishable and evenly distributed. Ghettos exacerbate poverty and reinforce social division. It seems crazy that most low cost housing for rent is much dearer to rent than to buy. If we are paying rent for people as a nation through housing benefits, why not pay less and help people become home owners? There should be no such thing as homelessness so there needs to be a safety net for the homeless.

We must preserve and improve the Scottish Health System and ensure it is always free to use for all. We need to build our resilience and self reliance and take much more responsibility for our own health and well being. As a nation, we consume far too much junk food and alcohol, waste too much food, eat too much meat and don't take enough exercise resulting in massive pressures on the health system. As the global population increases, we need people to take much better care of their own health so health systems can cope. This requires a huge cultural change. Perhaps early results show that pricing cigarettes, alcohol and sugar has an impact so maybe there needs to be punitive levels of tax on junk food, alcohol, cigarettes and other harmful consumption. If we decriminalise drug taking, we will be in a much better position to support addicts. We need to see all types of addiction as a health issue and not a criminal issue.

A universal basic income would be a way to ensure that everyone enjoys a good standard of living and subsequently, better health and well being. We need a much more equitable way of coexisting and I think this can be achieved by ensuring that the highest earners (including any bonus, share options and pension packages) can be no more than 10 or 20 times the lowest earner, depending on the size of the organisation. We can see that capitalism in its current form creates bigger gaps between the rich and the poor; it is most inequitable. On the other hand, we have seen communism in its various forms has resulted in almost universal poverty. Both are inherently, utterly corrupt. We need something different but it must be much more equitable. Those earning the most should pay the most taxes but too much would be a disincentive. A good balance would be UBI + a tax free allowance with bands of taxation beyond that of 10% increasing in multiples of 10 up to 50% for income brackets.

There needs to be a much better work / life balance for good health and well being and our public spaces need to be more family oriented. Healthy leisure pursuits need to be well supported.

3 What does planning need to do to enable development and investment in our economy so that it benefits everyone?

First and foremost, we must invest in our own people. We know from research that adverse childhood experiences have lifelong impacts that have devastating effects on the individual and in the long term cost the country much more in supports than it would if we invested in getting it right from the ante natal stage. Eradicating poverty and inequity would be a big help. Therefore, where it is needed, high levels of investment in family support will likely cost less in the long run and provide better outcomes for individuals.

We need to be anticipating what the future needs are in Scotland and elsewhere. These are most likely to be food, clothing and shelter; renewables, AI, leisure, social connectivity, etc. We need to target our skill sets to those but always be value driven especially in a world with exponential population growth where we need to distinguish carefully between wants and needs. We need to prioritise appropriately to achieve a more equitable existence.

Sustainability has to be at the heart of everything we do so I would advocate a circular economy. There has to be a major turnaround from current practices or we'll destroy the planet.

Big business and corporate bodies have so far enriched a few people and impoverished the vast majority. Think of the gig economy, zero hours contracts. All wealth today has been created from that inherited historically through empire building, very unfair taxation and exploitation of people and resources. Today's new wealth has been created by those at the top creaming off most for themselves by exploiting their workforce or their customers. That needs to stop. The level of wealth that a very few have been permitted to accrue has been done because political systems have allowed it. We need fairer wealth distribution. Therefore, new politics must make a huge change to that. You have probably seen the YouTube videos that show the wealthiest in the world have more than the rest of us put together. No matter how creative, inventive or hard working those at the top may be (many are not) it does not merit that obscene level of inequity. They have their wealth on the backs of others, either their workers or their customers; so they are not paying workers enough and they are charging customers too much. Whatever system we put in place, it must address this exploitative profiteering with urgency. I would prefer the model I suggested above.

4 What policies are needed to improve, protect and strengthen the special character of our places?

We need a massive clean up of old industrial sites to make brownfield sites more suitable for housing, recreation, leisure and new industry. We need to discourage too much urban sprawl as we need land for food production. However, we need to ensure that our land is accessible for leisure and mental regeneration. This needs measures to stop erosion of footpaths etc. We need more access for healthy pursuits such as walking and cycling in urban and rural areas. It is regenerative for everyone to have access to beautiful land and coastal areas. We need to ensure this is available for all but in a sustainable manner.

If vacant and derelict land has not been utilised for long periods, ownership should be established and unless there is a good reason for it, compulsory purchase should be considered by government and the land put to good public use for housing, commercial development, farming, etc, depending upon which is most suitable.

I have addressed many of the issues of how town centres and rural areas might look in the questions above but we need to ensure sufficient public green space in towns and cities.

Land ownership needs careful consideration, particularly where wealthy people own vast tracts. They need to be made responsible and accountable for the proper care and upkeep of the land. Their personal or commercial interests must never trump sustainability and wider population benefits. Indigenous people must be entitled to own land and be entitled to live and work there, even if that means, forcing wealthy land owners to sell or give over pieces of land. Wealthy land owners must not be allowed to profit from this.

Vertical farming should be considered as a way forward because we need to reduce food miles, increase productivity and variety of homegrown produce. Productivity is far higher per square metre for leafy greens and exotics than alternatives but it is not suitable for grain and meat production so need to be in balance with traditional farming methods. However, vertical farms do not use soil or ground water so can be sited on brown field sites, in towns and cities and that can further reduce food miles.

We already have good heritage protection for historical sites and listed buildings etc. That should continue. It would be good if we could make such parts of our cultural heritage freely available to all.

We need to take measures to protect our natural heritage and to restore woodland, and peatland where possible. Sustainability must be at the heart of all we do. There should be a national imperative

to identify all sites where indigenous planting and rewilding can occur and to act on that. There needs to be a complete ban on all peat based composts. There needs to be a national overview of land use considering the balance we need among cultural and natural heritage, housing, industry, commerce, agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, leisure and tourism. This all needs to be within a sustainable framework and in a circular economy.

5 What infrastructure do we need to build to realise our long term aspirations?

I have addressed many of the infrastructure issues above.

We need far better digital connectivity to enable more remote or home working and reduce the strain on the transport network. This can also enable greater international commerce.

We need a lot more locally tailored renewables and measures to get as much off grid as possible. We need to maximise our use of renewables from land and sea, PV, wind, wave, tidal, hydro. We need a massive R & D into electrical storage systems.

All towns and cities need multiple, localised, transport hubs with park and ride / walking and cycling facilities so that much greater use is made of public transport, with much better physical connectivity between trains, trams, buses, planes underground and water transportation as I described above. Transport needs to be frequent and timing considered for connections. Rural areas need transport on demand rather than scheduled.

Water and sewage need to be overhauled. We do not know where our mains water pipes are in the ground, many are untraceable. Too much water is lost through leakage. We are producing more and more sewage and need to think about how we treat and discharge it. Current practice is highly polluting of our waterways and oceans and this impacts detrimentally on sea life and ultimately on the quality of the food we take from our rivers and seas. We need to consider how we can safely recycle human sewage rather than discharge it. Can it be used to produce energy? Fertiliser?

We cannot sustain landfill so need to think about how we can fundamentally reduce waste and deal with the waste we do produce. Again, can it be used to produce energy if it cannot be recycled?

We need to be investing in the thinkers and creatives to come up with sustainable solutions so this requires a personnel infrastructure that must be well connected.

Finally, if we implement the 17 sustainability goals in the short term, we'll be well on the way to success. The biggest issue is in doing this with the populace, rather than to them. I'm afraid our track record is not good but I live in hope.