

## **Call for Ideas on the National Planning Framework**

The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes the call for ideas on the future of planning in Scotland. The Trust works to improve the wellbeing of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. We focus on policy and practice which promotes community and societal wellbeing – that is, living well together.

We believe that wellbeing should be the defining goal of government, as is outlined in the National Performance Framework (NPF), as well as provide a framework to define and measure shared outcomes. Over the past decade, we have seen Scotland's wellbeing approach grow and develop, with the National Performance Framework clearly setting out the purpose of Government.

Given this, in the first instance it is confusing that the National Planning Framework is called the NPF, which is the shortening of the name of the overriding National Performance Framework. Secondly, it's not clear enough how the National Planning Framework is going to meet the National Performance Framework outcomes. I would expect at the very least the planning framework, and local development plans, strive towards the national outcome, we 'live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe', and I can't see that in the [Transforming Scotland's Planning](#) website.

Going forward, the Trust advocates for a closer alignment between the NPF and all aspects of government policy, including planning

Our research and experience emphasises the need to shift from silos to working together, and we urge planning to use a holistic wellbeing lens to enable a nuanced and effective contribution to Scotland's priorities for a sustainable future. We also ask that communities are more included. There needs to be a change of gear, moving from 'engagement' to 'empowerment; or from '[doing to](#)' to '[doing with](#)', that will give citizens, including the 'unusual suspects', a say in their local development plan. Despite the introduction of the Planning Act (2019), the levers and resources (such as community development support) are often inadequate in terms of levelling up communities' input to planning with that of other stakeholders, like property developers.

### PLACEMAKING

The National Planning Framework suggests '[placemaking should be at the forefront of development and that NPF](#) should be more prescriptive to ensure that placemaking principles are carried through to development management. It was recommended that pressure to meet housing targets should not compromise the ability to deliver high quality design'. We would support that proposal for increasing the use and impact of the Place Principle, which commits to:

**All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places.**

Where you live and the agency and control you have (including over your local physical environment) impacts on individual and community wellbeing. If local authorities are more pressed to meet housing targets than community wellbeing, they can be forced to ignore other important outcomes, for example in terms of community connectedness, community voice, combatting isolation, supporting healthy lifestyles and reducing carbon emissions. Active use of the place principle and the National Performance Framework will help ensure that decisions are made 'in the round' and all the trade-offs are thoroughly considered.

For the place principle, and planning, to reach potential in terms of creating a more successful Scotland with opportunities for all, the power dynamics in planning need to be readdressed. Planners and designers need to go further to harness and utilise the knowledge of communities and encourage active participation. This will require skills and resources (including time) to go to communities, to listen to their needs and support them with a variety of approaches to work in partnership with developers, who often do not have the skills or experience around promoting participation.

#### PROMOTING TOWN CENTRES

Through our listening, our story-telling projects and research we understand that towns face many challenges but [also include many assets](#). There is no one solution to the reinvigorating our towns after the reduction in retail, but approaches such as [arts-led development](#) and [community asset ownership](#), can contribute to developing our towns, including town centres.

We encourage the policy to go further to promote mixed use of town-centre and strong cross sectoral partnerships to lead towns' development.

We hope that you find these comments helpful. If you would like to discuss any of our work further, please contact me on [pippa@carnegieuk.org](mailto:pippa@carnegieuk.org) – we would be pleased to hear from you.