

NPF4 Call for Ideas

Any thinking about National planning must be in the context of the current Coronavirus pandemic, the short and long term consequences of which are far from understood at this moment in time. Assuming a positive and successful end to the pandemic, there will be huge pressure to fire up the economy using all the tools available to Scottish government. While it makes much sense then to proceed with considerable urgency, it will be even more critical to ensure that projects aimed at economic resurrection are sustainable and just as firmly focused on addressing the issues of climate change.

Some ideas may be provided through an examination of the Stern report, not only in its perhaps now somewhat outdated set of suggested actions, but also from consideration of the argument in favour of climate change *investment* to save spending enormous sums later as we address the devastating impacts of irreversible climate change.

All of these are required to deliver effective planning for the future:

- A Circular Economy
- Consistent national policies
- Supplementary local policies
- (very local) Place Plans and policies integrating land use and statutory planning
- Considering Life-cycle energy costs as part of all planning decisions.

The retention of embodied energy and cultural values should ensure a presumption in favour of the informed maintenance of existing buildings and places.

The relative sustainability of location is vital (Town Centres First should be a priority)

What we will need to do to reach the target of net zero emissions by 2045.

The Institute is not clear as to the precise definition of net zero emissions. Scotland must not achieve net zero emissions by exporting its climate pollution to other countries. On the one hand we must understand and conserve our natural and cultural resources far better, and on the other we require to take steps to ensure that any new developments reflect the highest environmental standards such as Passivhaus or similar.

We must cultivate a sense of urgency. Notwithstanding the NPF4 2050 projected end-date, some hard targets will require to be introduced and achieved well in advance of 2050. There will require to be regular monitoring and reviewing of progress.

All sectors will require to be brought on board, including the third sector with its communities of place and of interest.

Achieving net zero emissions will be difficult enough by the target date of 2045, and the new Scotland should also be aiming for an economy which uses only our (per capita) share of the world's resources, around one third of our present take-up. We accept that this is an immense challenge but its explicit recognition is a necessary first step.

The effective addressing of climate change will only be achieved by the successful integration of town and country planning with other plans, including land use planning and marine planning. This is easier said than done, but must be successfully completed at all scales from the National, through the regional and local, to the community level: there is an urgent need for such integrative management planning at the level of the single community. Transition Towns may be showing the way

There needs to be a consistent approach across all planning authorities. This requires firm guidance and leadership. Communities of place and of interest have important roles in achieving this.

Ultimately, Planning Authorities must be able to *require* developments to contribute to net zero.

The opportunities that this could provide to support jobs and the economy.

The reconstruction of the economy will be greatly assisted by the financing of schemes to address climate change (see the Stern report) and after the CV19 pandemic this will be doubly necessary. Scotland must not lose sight of this opportunity to realign environment, economy and community, or place, work and folk as Patrick Geddes described them.

While these are important we need to consider more than jobs, the economy, and GDP: developments must be sustainable and with positive impacts in terms of environment, economy, and community.

How places can be made more resilient to the long term impacts of climate change.

Climate change is happening now and its consequences must be understood and addressed: in this way perhaps people will be more ready to anticipate the extent of the work required to address these longer term impacts.

There must be more place-based conservation-based planning. Just zoning and building more commercial floor space and hoping something will turn up isn't good enough now, if it ever was.

Passivhaus energy efficiency standards must be *required* for all new housing.

Local heat networks must be *required* in new developments.

District heating networks must be *required* across multiple ownerships.

Fuel poverty must be effectively addressed, ideally on an area basis.

There must be effective integration of land use with planning: for example flooding control by natural flow management, not massive flood protection capital works downstream.

What climate change-friendly places might look like in the future.

They will be places where there is a balanced mix of housing, working, and

recreational provision in the same location.

They will be places which are adequately served by (free?) well-integrated public transport.

They will be places with excellent digital communications.

They will be places with easy access to nature and the countryside in terms of public open space and settlement settings.

They will be places where people feel they have a hand in their maintenance, conservation, the management of change, and their futures.

They will be places which respond positively and distinctively to their landscape and/or townscape settings.

Greater density and better spaces are *both* required for improved places. Improved learning from traditional places will be valuable.

Within development sites, stronger and more legible green spaces and connected networks will feature: planning authorities must be able to *require* this, as most developers currently take a minimal approach, hardly if ever producing a worthwhile or valuable open-space resource.

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

All strategies, including the National Planning Framework, must *require*, not simply encourage, the use of brownfield land instead of the development of greenfield sites.

Brownfield site development must not be inhibited by development costs so, for example, dereliction or contamination must be addressed by owners or public agencies so that all brownfield sites can play an effective part in sustainable development.

There should be no loss of greenfield land or quality agricultural land. Even poorer agricultural land may be of local or regional significance, or can have afforestation potential, in whole or in part. This is an important frontier or interface between land use and 'statutory' planning.

There should be ready access to facilities by walking and cycling; and public transport – ideally multimodal – should be prioritised before private car or plane.

There should be an effective localisation, not centralisation (often promoted for cost-saving rather than service reasons) of essential facilities.

Both place-*maintaining* and place-*making* will be key to healthy and well rounded lifestyles.

Scotland needs a greater commitment to good design quality, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the poverty of design of its mass housing.

Substandard designs should never be approved because of concerns of a failure to meet figures produced by publicly impenetrable housing delivery calculations.

All planning authorities in Scotland should be suitably design-skilled, in-house. Communities require confidence that their own planners both understand and can respond to their places. A proper planning service cannot be solely provided by the occasional arrival of *Wise Men from the East*.

Given that most sites have important existing contexts, conservation officers as well as architect-planners, landscape architects, and urban designers, should be at the core of any place-understanding, planning, and regulating teams.

To complement adequately-skilled planning teams, every planning authority should have an (urban) design review panel which provides early collegiate views on the design issues of specific sites and policies, and suggests positive lines of exploration to deliver high-quality design schemes which enhance their contexts. Such panels would include in their deliberations such matters as sustainability.

The opportunity should be taken to incorporate specifically Scotland's architecture policy in the integrated Scottish Planning Policy/National Planning Framework 4: as well as requiring consideration of the conventional architectural traits therein identified, the continuing need for beauty, the uplifting of spirits and its effect on wellbeing, should be stressed.

Where we might want to live in 2050.

Largely where we are now, but significantly enhanced

How many and what types of homes we will need.

As important as the quantity of homes will be, the quality of them and their locations will also be vital. Most of us even then will be living in today's homes. supposing that at best we build only 1% of the housing stock per year. There will be no second chances, and we must build the best we can in the most sustainable locations.

How we can encourage more people to live in rural Scotland.

We must maintain and enhance rural facilities, including

Schools: any rural school closures should be subject to local development plan consideration and consultation, in recognition of their key roles in rural life.

Public transport

Competitive broadband

Integrated land use and planning

Addressing fuel poverty

Addressing poor housing

Addressing the oppressive effect on housing availability of a free-for-all market for second homes and holiday accommodation

Whether we could target development to address longstanding differences in health and quality of life.

The question should not be whether we could – we must!

This is likely to involved serious investment in the community, economy, and environment, especially at community level.

Whether and where we might need new settlements, and regeneration of existing communities.

This is unlikely. We should

Focus on existing centres/settlements

Use existing infrastructure

Focus on the achievement of more dense, compact settlements

Place far greater emphasis on conserving green fields and cleaning up brownfield sites

A moratorium on greenfield development is worthy of examination.

How places could be more inclusive, diverse, creative, vibrant, safe, resilient and empowering.

The conservation-based maintenance and enhancement of existing places would pay dividends.

Creative, not merely market-led approaches, are required: see comments above about skills of planning authorities and complementary design review panels.

Housing should be reintroduced to the heart of settlements, especially by re-use and revival: conversion and improvement grants will be vital components, along with fuel poverty enhancements. Place Plans as well as Local Development Plans must address such measures, but without housing grants they are likely to fail.

3. What does planning need to do to enable development & investment in our economy to benefit everyone?

The economic, environmental, and social circumstances have changed dramatically as a result of the current crisis. The Institute believes the commitment in the current SPP to the sustainability outcomes agreed by the Home Nations is still valid, and any NPF4 proposals and policies, and National Developments, should be consistent with these outcomes.

Development and investment must be plan-led not market-led. They must reflect the needs of the community, the economy and environment.

What our economy might look like in 2050.

One which is less reliant on the worship of GDP.

One where we know who owns all parts of our country as named individuals, who all pay fair taxes on their activities in Scotland.

One where we have a Universal Basic Income

How planning can anticipate and respond to the economic challenges of Brexit.

We are all doomed!! Brexit is the apparent antithesis of the stability and sustainability we seek. We must hold Brexiters to account and make the best of our own patch as circumstances allow. It is still not clear what Brexit actually means in practice, but as well as being fearful we must be watchful and ready to call out anything which is contrary to a positive Scottish future.

We must maintain our links with the rest of Europe, and give the alternatives fierce scrutiny in any independence referendum.

What the key sectors might be and what infrastructure they may need to support them.

Conserving what we have and implementing the reshaping of compact settlements again.

The integration of land use and planning, like the integration of health and social care, are more talked about than achieved thus far, but they both must be made to work.

How planning could stimulate and distribute growth.

Growth is unlikely over the plan period. In any event its pursuit is overrated, especially in the context of climate change. But there will be change, and planning must identify needs and manage change ~ which also involves the conservation of our existing places and activities.

What type, scale and distribution of business and industrial land and premises will be needed.

Significant investment will be required in a rural areas where land uses change to reflect more enlightened climate change priorities.

Where significant investment sites might be.

In settlements, carefully integrated, hopefully.

How economic opportunities could improve, or be accessible from, places where deprivation is concentrated.

Those areas where such shorter lives and poorer health currently exist should be the places which answer these questions. The disparities will not be solved by throwing money at them, even if we had an unlimited supply. These problems must be challenged sustainably, by addressing them from perspectives of place, work and folk.

4. How can planning improve, protect and strengthen the special character of our places?

Town Centres First must continue with more than lip service being paid to its execution. Should there be greater scrutiny at the times of development plan or capital spending approvals?

What special places will need protection in the future.

Mostly, the existing settlements of today. They need to have greater care by positive maintenance and enhancement.

There must be continued public investment in town and settlement centre infrastructure

There must be a focus on quality as much or more than on quantity.

This will be especially true in *special* areas, where there is a need for forward planning in the form of Management Plans. At present such mechanisms seem too often to be parked in the "too difficult" tray, but they are a vital mechanisms, especially in terms of successful public engagement.

Management Plans provide clarity of view as to what the special characteristics of a place actually are and how best to conserve and enhance them: it is essential that communities of place and of interest are engaged in their preparation and implementation. Special places do not need to be nationally important for them to be special to their communities, and thus worthy of careful consideration.

National assets, including wild land, designated areas and designated sites, should be maintained, protected and enhanced. As well as conventional development plan matters, land use strategies and the like should also be incorporated to ensure all public priorities are reflected in forward management plans.

Natural and cultural assets must be managed as befits them: they are rarely if ever replaced.

The climate change and coronaviruses emergencies have been mentioned above. They must not be used as unnecessarily blunt tools or excuses for the destruction of significant natural or cultural assets, but rather be thought of as opportunities to build up further natural and cultural capital.

Coherent management strategies are required for the special areas firstly to ensure everyone understands what the special qualities are, and secondly to enable everyone to appreciate what must be done to maintain and enhance these special qualities.

What the future might be for our rural, coastal and island communities.

There should be a particular role for the integration of land-use and statutory plans.

Land ownership must also be addressed.

Marine planning will be a vital component of NPF4 as the oil extraction is wound

down. *Carbon capture* would seem to be an idea whose time is overdue, especially while there may be spare capacity in the north-east.

How we could unlock the potential of vacant and derelict land.

By acquiring it, especially land within settlements, readying it for development, cleaning up, and then developing it in useful and sustainable ways in association with communities of place and of interest.

What our city and town centres might look like in the future.

They will have maintained and enhanced townscapes, and a better balance of residential, work and leisure facilities.

They will have properly integrated public transport systems, possibly free at point of use. Private cars, even electric ones, will be merely tolerated, not encouraged.

To a considerable extent our settlement centres will look like improved versions of their current selves.

Whether we need to think about the concept of green belts.

All settlements must have easy access to green and/or blue hinterlands. Green belts ensure this and must be maintained and managed effectively: they are not a resource to be relentlessly mined.

How we can get the most out of our productive land.

All land is productive. They don't make it any more. All plans should conserve land and enhance it. Where there are any proposals to do otherwise the consequences should be clearly spelt out in terms of loss of productive capacity and natural and cultural capital. Our successors will thank us for our improved housekeeping, or damn us for our profligacy.

How we can protect and restore peatland.

There should be no further use of horticultural peat.

As with historic mineral workings some time ago, there should be a review of any current commercial peat-working consents. The presumption should be that they will be extinguished as soon as possible.

Existing peatlands must be brought back into good heart through public investment.

How we can plan blue and green infrastructure.

In an integrated way, thinking about our responsibilities to the planet and the long-term well-being of environment, community and economy.

How we can strengthen the character and heritage of our many different places.

With knowledge and skills, by survey, analysis, synthesis, planning, implementing, monitoring, and regularly reviewing, all in conjunction with communities of place and of interest.

By rebuilding a planning system with the skills and resources to do all these things, not merely as an notionally regulatory, "Cinderella" part of an unfettered market economy.

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

Much of it is here already and must be successfully maintained and conserved.

All new infrastructure must be consistent in planning and delivery with both the National Planning Framework 4 and Scottish Government's forthcoming Climate Change Plan update. There must not be self-interested parties working at cross purposes, especially with public funds or tax breaks. This coordination must be a priority, especially at local and community levels. Effective plans will be required in order to achieve it. Management Plans at the community level should be encouraged, whether by Place Plans or otherwise. Some urgent pilots integrating land use and settlement planning at the community level would be timely.

Time is of the essence, and we must sort out compulsory purchase mechanisms for land assembly in order to enable successful public design, assembly and delivery of climate-change-positive proposals over the next few years.

Land reform.

Land value taxation.

Meeting the housing needs of the population, as with other Sustainable Development Goals, must remain a key requirement of any Scottish planning system.

Very few, if any, communities of place or of interest have confidence in the current planning system to deliver real benefits to the country. In particular the local development plan, and perhaps local place plans, must gain greater credibility in the public eye. It is simply not acceptable nor robust when, for example, additional housing sites can be approved on appeal based on some simplistic arithmetical shortfall, without any effective control able to be exerted by the planning authority, and in the face of meaningful views expressed by communities of interest and/or of place.

What infrastructure we will need in the future.

Higher density living in more compact settlements, with considerably reduced resource requirements.

How we can make better use of existing infrastructure capacity, including through innovation.

Higher density, more compact living in existing settlements.

Where transport connections will be needed to support future development.

Public transport systems will require to be well-integrated.

Public transport may require to be free first to achieve an appropriate modal shift from the unsustainable patterns of today.

Air travel, and associated airport developments, can have no part in Scotland's

transport systems in the foreseeable future, in the interests of sustainability and addressing climate change.

Where our international gateways, hubs and links will be in a post-Brexit world.

The pandemic has shown what has been plain in the past, that personal transportation in a digital world is not an essential feature in many circumstances.

How we can sustain our lifelines.

Remove the weapons of mass destruction from our shores.

Invest in greater resilience nationally and at community level, especially in the caring professions.

Reduce our reliance on the world's limited resources.

Maintain, cherish and enhance what we have, especially in terms of natural and cultural capital.

Promote work towards the Sustainable Development Goals, since we are all in this together.

How digital connectivity could change the way we live and work.

It has and it is. Digital connectivity must be seen as the right of everyone. It is particularly important in rural areas which the market economy has significantly ignored thus far. Digital connectivity must be seen as the right of everyone. It bears repeating.

Where our natural resources for energy are.

Our main natural resources for energy are wave, tidal, and wind: in the interests of sustainability, nuclear and carbon-based energy sources should be ruled out for the duration of NPF4. Reduction in current energy use must be an initial priority.

What emerging and future technologies we will need to plan for.

Improved digital connectivity as well as carbon capture may be the only vaguely predictable technologies in what is clearly an unsettlingly unpredictable world. As well as new technologies coming on stream, we must also face up to the possibility of technological failure to address medical emergencies such as bacterial or viral pandemics. As we have seen, the technological fix can be late or possibly may not turn up at all...