

Dumfries and Galloway Chapter NPF4 Workshop

24 February 2020, The Stove, Dumfries

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Background and Attendance

This event was organised as part of a series of NPF4 events with RTPI Scotland Chapters organised for Scottish Government across Scotland in early 2020. The purpose of each two hour event was to give planning professionals an opportunity to voice their suggestions for National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) in a workshop setting, as well as discuss the issues and challenges in taking these ideas forward. This allowed Scottish Government to gather professionals' views to support them as they draft NPF4. Representatives from Scottish Government Planning and Architecture were on hand to outline the background, timeline and main goals of NPF4, and answer any questions.

Participants took part in facilitated discussions, having been asked to come up with a policy or project for NPF4 that would contribute to achieving Scotland's becoming a zero carbon society by 2045. These policies or projects were fit under the theme of People, Work or Place. Presentation of ideas, discussion and voting followed, to pick the 'best' project – judged on innovation, effectiveness and deliverability.

The Dumfries and Galloway NPF4 Chapter event had 9 participants from a range of professional backgrounds. The main ideas generated are discussed below:

People

Group 1 – District heating

- Focussed on district heating (low carbon heat supply), particularly for rural areas
- This is anti-poverty fuel, is sustainable and has a community focus
- It was made clear that grant funding was needed for this to take place in rural areas such as Dumfries and Galloway

This was the 'winning' idea in the world cup

Group 2 – Reducing dependence on polluting vehicles

- Looked at minimising car usage
- There was a discussion around promoting electric cars, which caused a bit of a debate amongst delegates
- Looked into combining electric vehicle charging stations with other services to create a hub of activity



Challenges included:

- Cost - who pays/delivers and electric cars are not considered affordable yet
- The project would require a lot of space and charging points would need installed

Work

Group 3 – Digital connectivity outside of cities

- This idea was presented in a strong rural context
- Dumfries and Galloway does not have the same quality of broadband as urban areas
- This idea was based around providing new broadband for these areas as well as creating community hubs in smaller towns where organisations, businesses and individuals could work together
- Also mentioned an increase in the facilitation to work from home or having less of a commute to work
- Looked into how technology could be carefully placed for best use

Positives include:

- It would improve housing pressure in certain areas
- Would give citizens more of a lifestyle choice
- It would raise the profile of small towns

Group 4 – Add value to local resources

- Looked at making best use of local produce
- At the moment, local produce often gets shipped elsewhere and so this group wanted it to be made locally available and accessible
- They wanted NPF4 to promote the opportunity for local produce to be made and kept in its original location. E.g. using local produce in local buildings
- This project aimed to diversify the economy

Place

Group 5 – Infrastructure improvements to reduce travel

- This group focused on how NPF4 could design towns and cities to increase pedestrian numbers and promote other forms of active travel
- They looked at how infrastructure can be altered in a smart way to create services
- Looked at renewables, charging points for electric vehicles, public transport and working from home/shared spaces
- There is an issue with scale in areas like Dumfries and Galloway which means a different approach must be used in rural areas and urban areas

Group 6 – Energy efficiency within community district heating

- This idea relates to Group 1's idea but takes more of a community angle
- The group wanted to create a network that brings people together – i.e. a 'community enabler'
- Retrofitting homes and commercial buildings with district heating





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Positives include:

- Renewable
- Builds community
- Can be used on new and existing properties

Challenges include:

- Would require a culture change i.e. 'does this affect me?' attitudes
- Costs - who will pay/deliver and local resources are expensive
- May be hard to make sustainable in a rural context



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