

Highlands and Islands Chapter NPF4 Workshop

10 March 2020, Cairngorms National Park
Authority, Grantown-on-Spey

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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 Highlands and Islands NPF4 Chapter event had 17 participants from a range of professional backgrounds. The main ideas generated are discussed below:

People

Group 1 – Active travel infrastructure

- This group wanted to join up all key villages and towns with comprehensive non-motorised vehicle routes (i.e. active travel)

Positives include:

- Reduces car usage and save carbon
- Mental and physical health benefits
- Helps contribute to behavioural change that will help achieve the net zero target
- It is scalable

Work

Group 2 – Rural transport policy

- This group created a more strategic approach to rural transport policy
- Discussed how work is the biggest travel requirement

- They looked at having a complete overhaul of public transport in rural areas and aiming to make it free for all citizens as well as improving the cycle network, active travel infrastructure and adding charging points for electric vehicles
- Also looked at restricting parking at development sites – only allowing enough space for parking for disabled people and trade vehicles to park. If parking were included in a scheme, a developer contribution must be made towards public transport and the active travel network
- This should be funded by changes to fiscal policy

Positives include:

- Reduces emissions and therefore better air quality
- Reduces fuel poverty
- More efficient, flexible working
- Safer roads
- More sustainable public transport
- Encourages social interaction
- Frees up space where car parks were for green and blue infrastructure

Place

Group 3 – Generate live work breathe local

- This idea was for NPF4 to have a new energy network which is targeted at a local level
- It would involve changing the grid to create a localised energy network linked to communities
- It would introduce outcome based pricing for electricity i.e. the price would reflect the electricity's perceived value, not its actual cost
- There would be communication between areas and would make it much easier for rural communities to thrive

Positives include:

- Improves the transport network by electrification of the road network
- Quadruples the railway lines, creating safe active travel between and within communities
- Reduces the need for travelling long lengths
- Helps to improve rural housing stock in terms of triggering the renovation of old stock through installation of measures to recycle grey water, insulation, and microgeneration

Group 4 – Rural intergenerational hub

- Working and childcare force rural workers to travel a lot – this group looked into more innovative ways to reduce the need to travel as much for these activities
- There is scope for rural hubs to service local towns and villages
- These hubs would be intergenerational to help provide care for both elderly people and young children
- There would also be workspace options within these hubs



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This was the 'winning' idea in the world cup. Positives include:

- Old or derelict buildings are brought back into use
- Rural areas re-populated
- Travel would be reduced
- Hubs promote inclusiveness and intergenerational engagement
- Scope for energy creation and electric car charging points
- Helps to aid the health agenda by reducing dependence on car and therefore prevents obesity as well as improving mental health and even dementia



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