

NPF4 RTPI Scotland Chapter Workshops – West of Scotland

By Zach Claudino, Planning Officer at Glasgow City Council

On March 5th, town planners from Greater Glasgow joined together at the Mercure Hotel in Glasgow. We were invited by the RTPI to discuss Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

The RTPI is hosting a number of events on behalf of the Scottish Government to engage professionals in the development of NPF4. This is no small feat, considering the many changes embedded in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, most notably the inclusion of Scottish Planning Policy in NPF4.

Following a brief introduction from Craig McLaren and Lisa Davison we formed 5 teams and were assigned one of three themes: People, Work, and Place. A knock-out battle of 3 consecutive rounds of voting would determine the winning policy proposal.

Group 1 (People) drafted a broad policy of 'Presumption in favour of sustainability'. The crux of this policy rests on connecting urban and suburban areas by taking an infrastructure first approach to development. Interconnected active travel routes would be required in future proposals. Developers would pay into a novel 'roof tax' to fund the active travel projects.

Group 2 (Work) drafted a policy based on the concept of 'Localised Incubator Units'. The policy promotes flexible working (something many of us are learning at the moment!) with an emphasis on localised work units in rural towns. The hubs would be located in accessible locations like town centres, potentially bringing empty buildings back into use. This would spark regeneration and could leverage new investment into the area.

Group 3 (Work) drafted a broad policy titled 'Integrated Green Land Use'. The policy would focus on vacant and derelict land for novel employment generation, education, and environmental remediation. The policy would seek to enhance local wellbeing, attract investment, and combat climate change.

Group 4 (Work) drafted a policy based project titled 'Megabytes from Megawatts'. This would bring scale to an existing policy which uses funding from onshore wind projects to support local community projects. The policy would focus on the national priorities in NPF4. Potential projects include the installation of high speed broadband to rural communities. This would help tackle social isolation, digital exclusion and potentially increase active travel.

Group 5 (Place) drafted a policy titled 'Protecting and Creating Great Places to Combat the Climate Emergency'. This place-making policy would provide a clear definition of place-making in NPF4 within the broader context of climate change. The policy would have cross-cutting themes for other policies. Detailed policies would be developed with 4 to 5 objectives under each topic. The policy would promote carbon reduction through good place-making.

In the end, Group 3 and Group 5 were declared joint winners. Each group was engaged in lively discussion and it was clear that there was a passion for planning around the room. The event was also a great way to meet other planners, including those from the Scottish Government. I think I can speak for everyone when I extend my thanks to the RTPI for putting on this event. I hope that it won't be too long before we can all partake in the next one!

Stay safe,

Zach Claudino