



Local Authority & National Park Heads of Planning  
Local Authority Heads of Housing

cc.

Heads of Planning Scotland  
Association of Local Authority Chief Housing  
Officers  
Homes for Scotland  
Federation of Master Builders  
Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

Our ref: A32087297

23 February 2021

Dear Colleague

## **NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 FIRST STEP TOWARDS A MINIMUM ALL-TENURE HOUSING LAND REQUIREMENT**

Last year was unprecedented on many levels. As we have developed new approaches to policy making in response to the pandemic, our efforts to find new ways of joint working between local authorities, stakeholders and Scottish Government have brought benefits. As we move into this new year, and we progress our national spatial plan that will guide our future development to 2050, we wish to see that joint working continuing, and broadening to involve a wider range of stakeholders.

The Scottish Government is committed to enabling the delivery of high quality homes, in the right locations to meet our current and future needs.

The Planning (Scotland) Act, 2019, sets out a requirement for the National Planning Framework to include ‘targets for the use of land in different areas of Scotland for housing’. In March 2020, we consulted on a [proposed methodology](#) to meet the requirement, which suggested working with local authorities both individually and collectively in regional groupings. We received a range of responses to that consultation and an [independent analysis](#) was carried out. We also convened a Housing Advisory Panel, comprising a range of individuals with planning and housing related experience and interests. They have provided feedback to inform work on the requirement as it has progressed.

Having given consideration to the feedback, we have refined the approach and **we are now seeking your input to the next stage**. As key stakeholders in the outcomes of this work, we encourage you to engage positively through constructive co-operation. We wish to see close co-ordination between local authority planning and housing colleagues, and leadership in their engagement with local stakeholders from both the public and private sectors.



Accompanying this letter is a Method Paper that provides initial default estimates to inform the identification of a minimum all-tenure housing land requirement for individual authority areas. The paper explains that these are a **starting point** for meeting the above statutory requirement. They are the first step towards developing a Scotland-wide picture of the amount of land for housing that will be needed in the future, informed by local input, to guide allocations in Local Development Plans.

**As the process is on-going, we have not yet defined the final figures that we expect to be included in NPF4.** An overall figure for the whole of Scotland is therefore not provided. Figures for past housing completions in each local authority have been set out alongside the initial default estimates to help inform your consideration.

We request that authorities, either individually or collectively with regional partners:

1. Consider the initial default estimates and whether alternatives to the default assumptions about household projections and existing housing need should be applied.
2. Consider whether you wish to propose a different flexibility allowance, which should generally be greater than the proposed 25% minimum for urban areas and 30% minimum for rural areas.
3. Assess the extent to which your proposed land requirement compares with past completions for your area. Where the proposed requirement is substantially lower, our view is that authorities should consider whether it should be increased further.
4. Set out a locally adjusted estimate of the minimum all-tenure housing land requirement for your local authority area as a result of these adjustments.

This consideration should be informed by local input and evidence, and factor in policy ambitions to support growth in local housing provision. Consideration should also be given to relevant national drivers, including the six statutory outcomes set out in the 2019 Act (including rural repopulation and providing homes for older people and disabled people) and the NPF4 Position Statement, published November 2020, which sets out current thinking as work progresses towards a draft NPF4.

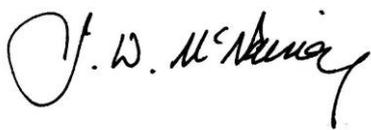
Housing Market Partnerships have a crucial role to play in this process and we encourage relevant interests to be part of this, including home providers. This is an early and important stage for inputting to the figures for NPF4. However, it is also important to note that further opportunities will be available for all stakeholders, particularly as the draft NPF4 will be issued for public consultation and considered by the Scottish Parliament. Beyond that, once published in the finalised NPF4, the Local Development Plan preparation process will provide opportunities to further consider the extent of land supply that will be provided beyond the minimum stated.

In addition to the Method Paper, a template for responding to the Scottish Government, and guidance for completing it, are enclosed along with an Excel Calculator.

We would ask that you complete and return the template with your evidence for locally adjusted estimates of the minimum all-tenure housing land requirement by **Friday 4 June 2021**. This provides time to engage locally with stakeholders and for authorities to come to a considered view. On receipt of this, the Scottish Government will consider the robustness of the evidence and estimates, prior to them being included in the draft NPF. Further information on that stage is set out in the Method Paper.

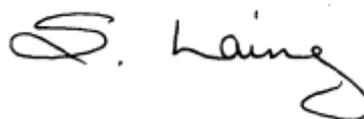
We are conscious that the legislative requirements and the processes for NPF4 and LDPs are new. Planning and Housing officials within Scottish Government will provide assistance where you would find this helpful. The information referred to above will be available online at [www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/](http://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/) or please contact Carrie Thomson, Principal Planner, at [carrie.thomson@gov.scot](mailto:carrie.thomson@gov.scot).

Yours sincerely



**John McNairney**

Chief Planner



**Shirley Laing**

Director for Housing and Social Justice

### Enclosures

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|------------------|--|
| Method Paper     | - Outlines the methodology and Initial Default Estimates     |
| Template         | - To be completed and returned                               |
| Guidance         | - To support completion of the template                      |
| Excel Calculator | - To support consideration, and to be completed and returned |