

Transforming Planning in Practice Development Planning Regulations and Guidance Subgroups

Scope & Content

Meeting 2, 4 February 2021 - notes

Attending:

Kate Givan – Key Agencies Group
John Kelly – Linlithgow Community Council
Bill Lindsay – Heads of Planning Scotland
Charles Nathan – EnvironmentLINK Scotland
Tammy Swift-Adams – Homes for Scotland
Stephen Tucker – Barton Willmore

Kate Houghton – PAD
Andy Kinnaird – PAD
Fiona Simpson – PAD
Carrie Thomson – PAD

Subgroup Outputs – Top 3 Priorities

There was general consensus on the group's 'top 3 priorities'. In addition the subgroup noted that skills will be an important consideration.

Priorities:

Place-based approach – outline what the expectations of this are
Delivery – this means minimum requirements of the Evidence Report
Climate change

Place-based approach

- The discussion noted that while there is broad support for place-based LDPs, this new style of plan will need to fulfil its Development Management role. SG noted that as part of the statutory development plan NPF4 will also be a Development Management tool. SG noted that discussion about the level of locational detail has also been had in the Evidence Report and Gate Check and Procedures subgroups.
- There was discussion of the need to consider place-based expectations, and particularly how local place plans (LPPs) can be integrated into the LDP process. At the neighbourhood scale it was also highlighted that care will be necessary in defining the boundaries of a 'place'.
- The subgroup suggested that some content currently contained in statutory supplementary guidance will need to be brought within the LDP. It was suggested that improved spatial and digital presentation of non-statutory supplementary guidance could help to make it more influential.
- The group discussed the remit of a 'place-based approach': Is this about graphic/digital presentation, or a spatial approach to planning? It was

suggested that both are essential, with the presentation reflecting the spatial approach to plan-making.

Delivery

- The subgroup sought clarity of guidance on the Evidence Report, so that Reporters are able to judge whether the ambitions in an LDP are realistic. It was suggested that costing of proposed necessary infrastructure would be required as part of this.
- The role of the Delivery Programme was discussed, in particular in identifying the reasons for site promotion, alongside barriers to progress.
- The subgroup suggested that masterplans can provide a 'hook' for collaborative delivery.
- There was discussion amongst the subgroup of achieving the balance of 'strong' and 'flexible' plans. It was suggested that a plan-led system requires commitment to implementation, and allows locational decisions to prioritise sustainability. On the other hand, there was some appetite to ensure that place-based policies could be adaptable and agile enough to apply to non-allocated sites.

Climate change

- The subgroup saw a leadership role for planning in meeting climate change targets.
- There was discussion amongst the subgroup about how LDPs could best contribute to reducing emissions. A localised, targeted approach that takes account of different circumstances on different sites and in different areas was proposed.
- It was suggested that as well as climate change, planning will need to take into account broader nature recovery. For example, new targets on biodiversity are likely to come into force during NPF4's adoption process.
- It was noted that a leadership role for planning in achieving Scotland's climate change targets sits within the context of a necessary broader culture change.

Skills

- The subgroup agreed there would be benefit to a broader consideration of the skills that will be needed to support the preparation of the new generation of LDPs. This covers a range of skills, including graphic presentation, the ability to interpret graphic information, and masterplanning.
- It was commented that there are graphic and design skills in local authorities, but because masterplanning activity tends to be outsourced those with this skillset do not often have the opportunity to obtain the necessarily experience.
- Suggestions for developing the necessary skills included referring back to the experience of the Improvement Service, and using the private sector.
- In respect of specific skills, given that in the immediate future it may be necessary to outsource some work it was suggested that developing briefing skills and experience should be a priority.

- It was highlighted that training for councillors will also be important, so they understand the changing role of LDPs.
- It was suggested that the growing role of planning needs to be properly resourced.

Final comments

- There are successes from public-private partnerships that can be taken and applied elsewhere.
- With regard to barriers to delivery: sectoral marine policy for offshore wind development requires site promoters to discuss site constraints with various stakeholders. It was suggested that this approach promotes transparency.
- It was queried if NPF4 or the LDP guidance will take an approach to site viability like that in use in England.
- It was suggested that the technical guidance should include a list of the stakeholders who will need to be involved in developing these parts of the LDP.

SG Overview of Progress & Process

- The subgroup agreed that working together had been a positive experience, and that it had been possible to find common ground, even in some areas of disagreement.
- It was commented that SG should monitor transition to the new system, as some local authorities are now trying to move forward while second guessing what the expectations of new LDPs will be.