

Transforming Planning in Practice Development Planning Regulations and Guidance Subgroups

Evidence Report & Gate Check

Meeting 2, 2 February 2021 - notes

Attending:

Irene Beautyman – RTPi Scotland
Ruth Cameron – Consultation Authorities
Allison Coard – DPEA
Elaine Farquharson-Black – Homes for Scotland
Stuart Forrest – Infrastructure Delivery Group
Debbie Livingstone – Transport Scotland
Amy Phillips – Transport Scotland
Gary Templeton – Heads of Planning Scotland

Robin Campbell - PAD
Dave Hall - PAD
Kate Houghton - PAD
Andy Kinnaird - PAD
Nikola Miller - PAD
Fiona Simpson - PAD
Carrie Thomson - PAD

Subgroup Outputs – Top 3 Priorities

There was general consensus across the group on the ‘top 3 priorities’, and few areas of contention.

Priorities:

What is sufficient evidence to get through the gate check?

Linking key stakeholders and the consultation process

How far does the Council need to go to resolve disputes

What is sufficient evidence to get through the gate check?

- The discussion noted that for an infrastructure first approach to be successful a draft spatial strategy should be included in the Evidence Report, but there was debate on the level of detail needed. There was recognition that spatial strategies will differ across authorities in terms of detail, because of differences in scale. It was agreed that site level detail would not be appropriate to consider at the Gate Check stage. Consideration of the level of the detail needs to take account of SEA requirements and process.
- The issue of sites from a previous LDP was noted – there will be a need to consider whether it would be appropriate to include them in a future Plan.

- The subgroup suggested that 'sufficiency' of the evidence base should be covered in the guidance. However, it was noted that what is proportionate in terms of baseline infrastructure information will vary, depending on the provider.
- SG noted the intention for Gate Check and Examination to have distinct roles, rather than a repetition and handling of sites will be part of this.

Linking key stakeholders and the consultation process

- The subgroup saw benefit in key stakeholders being identified in guidance, along with advice on public engagement. SG noted wider guidance on community engagement is being prepared. Sub-group noted that inclusion of the spatial strategy in the Evidence Report could help create relatability for the public.
- Discussion was had on how far public engagement for the Evidence Report should go. Noted that it is important that the public understands how their comments can influence the Evidence Report & Gate Check.

How far does the Council need to go to resolve disputes?

- There was discussion of how areas of dispute are highlighted in the process of signing off the Evidence Report ready for submission to the Gate Check. There was general consensus around a targeted engagement approach.
- Discussion noted the potential link to LPPs, and how the evidence base could also be used by communities to support their plans. For those places where LPPs are not under preparation, the guidance could encourage use of, for example, the Place Standard, to support establishing the baseline.
- It was highlighted that Local Outcomes Improvement Plans were very evidence and data-led, and used the Place Standard. Could the Place Standard be used to support community engagement, by providing a sense check on the data proposed for inclusion in the Evidence Report?
- Scottish Government noted 2019 Act requirements on the need to engage some groups, as well as the 'public at large'.

There were no contentious issues to discuss.

SG Overview of Progress & Process

- It was highlighted that the baseline data is important, but appraisal of that data is also critical. This points to the possible agreement of methodologies through the Gate Check.
- SG confirmed that drafting is now underway and formal consultation will happen in due course.
- Feedback that the subgroup has provided a useful variety of perspectives. There has been a positive level of agreement, and would recommend using the approach again. It has been challenging to provide concrete outputs, as discussions have tended to lead to new thoughts and questions instead of solid solutions.