

INFRASTRUCTURE FIRST

The Infrastructure First policy within Draft NPF 4 puts infrastructure considerations at the heart of place making. This policy supports the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities that are necessary to create liveable and sustainable places. It also supports a more sustainable use of infrastructure, making better use of existing assets and prioritising low-carbon infrastructure, helping Scotland's transition to net zero.

Local Development Plans should:

- be based on an infrastructure first approach. They should:
 - align with relevant infrastructure plans and policies;
 - be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability;
 - set out the infrastructure requirements of the spatial strategy; and
 - indicate the type, level and location of the contributions that developments will be required to make.

Development proposals:

- which create an infrastructure need should demonstrate how account has been taken of the Scottish Government Investment Hierarchy, including the utilisation of existing infrastructure;
- which provide or contribute to necessary infrastructure should be supported;
- should not be supported unless they make provision to mitigate their impacts on infrastructure.

Responses to the Position Statement

There was support for the concept of an infrastructure first approach to development, although it was suggested that the approach needs to be more clearly defined. Other issues raised by respondents included: that the National Infrastructure Plan is fundamental for giving certainty and investor confidence; and that infrastructure requirements should be transparent, proportionate and viable.

Policy changes

The proposals in Draft NPF4 set out, for the first time, the intention to make infrastructure considerations central to land use and place making decisions. The policy defines what an 'infrastructure first' approach is and sets out the broad expectations to implement the approach through the planning system. These expectations include early engagement with stakeholders, the front loading of

infrastructure evidence in plan making and stronger links between infrastructure planning and delivery.

The proposals build on the aspirations expressed in NPF3 and SPP to make best use of existing infrastructure and service capacity, and target new development to areas where infrastructure capacity exists. Draft NPF4 also links new local development plans and proposals to the national investment and sustainable travel hierarchies for the first time, ensuring that the plan preparation process gives consideration to the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan, National Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Projects Review.