

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Draft NPF4 is about rebalancing our planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all our plans and decisions.

The four themes of: Sustainable Places; Liveable Places; Productive Places; and Distinctive Places as well as the spatial principles of Compact Growth; Local Living; Balanced Development; Conserving and Recycling Assets; Urban and Rural Synergy; and Just Transition all move towards sustainable, low emission, adaptable and adapted places and communities.

The proposed national developments embody these principles.

Development Plans:

- should manage the use and development of land in the long term public interest, meaning they seek to achieve Scotland's national outcomes and the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- should support the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods;
- should be based on an infrastructure first approach;
- should reduce the need to travel unsustainably by prioritising locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes;
- should strengthen community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change;
- should seek to ensure that an area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved;
- should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils;
- should identify and protect existing woodland and potential for its enhancement or expansion; and
- should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change.

Development proposals:

- should be considered with significant weight given to the Global Climate Emergency;
- should be designed to minimise emissions over their lifecycle in line with national decarbonisation pathways;
- that will generate significant emissions should not be supported unless the level of emissions is evidenced to be the minimum that can be achieved for a viable development and that the development is in the long term public interest;
- for national, major or EIA development should be accompanied by a whole life assessment of greenhouse gas emissions, which will be taken into account in the decision making process in relation to emissions reduction targets;

- for new buildings, alterations to buildings, infrastructure and spaces should be designed to be adaptable to the future impacts of climate change;
- which sensitively incorporate climate adaptation and mitigation measures for existing buildings, infrastructure and spaces should be supported.
- should be supported where they are consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods;
- to improve, enhance or provide active travel infrastructure or public transport and multimodal hubs should be supported;
- should be supported where they connect to existing heat networks or designed to allow for cost-effective connection at a later date;
- for occupied buildings should be designed to promote sustainable temperature management;
- should not be supported in the functional flood plain, with limited exceptions, or where surface water risk is not successfully mitigated or where discharge to the public sewer is increased;
- should be supported where they minimise the area of impermeable surface and provide adequate drainage of surface water wherever practicable by blue and green infrastructure;
- should only be supported where connected to the public water mains, with limited exceptions.
- for all forms of renewable energy and low carbon fuels and their enabling infrastructure should be supported in principle;
- for negative emissions technologies and carbon capture should be supported in principle;
- should aim to use materials with the lowest forms of embodied emissions;
- are encouraged to make use of previously used, sustainable, local, recycled and natural construction materials that also store carbon;
- seeking to explore, develop and produce fossil fuels will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances;
- for the development of unconventional oil and gas are not supported;

- for out of town retail which will generate significant footfall should not be supported;
- for new residential development within city/town centres and conversion or reuse of vacant upper floors for residential use should be supported;
- for permanent or temporary reuse of vacant or derelict land and buildings should be supported;
- on greenfield sites should not be supported, with limited exceptions
- should only be supported if designed to minimise the amount of disturbance to soils on undeveloped land and protects them from erosion or compaction;
- on peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat should not be supported, with limited exceptions;
- for new commercial peat extraction, including extensions to existing sites, should not be supported, with limited exceptions;
- should not be supported where ancient woodlands and trees would be lost or adversely affected, where there would be adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and trees of high biodiversity value or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;
- involving woodland removal should only be permitted where achieving significant and clearly defined public benefits and if removed in association with development, compensatory planting will generally be expected;
- requiring a coastal location in areas of the developed coast should be supported where need for further flood protection is not created and does not increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion and is anticipated to be supportable in the long term;
- impacting on the coast and also submitting a design statement should address appropriate issues regarding long term coastal vulnerability and resilience.

Responses to the Position Statement

There was support for the focus on tackling issues relating to climate change and for prioritising the reduction of emissions. Some respondents called for stronger language with respect to planning for net-zero emissions, and there were suggestions that rather than prioritising certain types of development, to encourage low emission developments, the policy should not allow developments which would

have a detrimental impact on climate change, while supporting developments that would achieve a reduction in emissions.

Policy changes

The policies in Draft NPF4 build on the aspirations in NPF3 which sought to reduce greenhouse gases and facilitate adaptation to climate change. Since the publication of NPF3 and SPP the climate emergency has been declared and the Scottish Climate Change Plan and adaptation programmes have been updated. The policies in NPF4 go significantly further than before, including, placemaking approaches that enhance support for sustainable locations in terms of emissions reduction and adaptation to climate risks, and for the first time, larger developments to deliver a whole life assessment of greenhouse gas emissions..