



PKC Draft Response to Scottish
Government Consultation on Draft NPF4

National Spatial Strategy Part 1

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Sustainable Places

Summary – page 4 – 6

Part 1 – A National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045, recognises the critical role our approach to planning and development can play in helping Scotland reach its Net Zero target by 2045, adapting to and mitigating for the effects of climate change, and in supporting nature restoration and recovery.

It introduces the National Spatial Strategy, which is seen as a shared vision that will guide future development in a way that reflects the four overarching principles of Sustainable Places, Liveable Places, Productive Places and Distinctive Places. The supporting spatial diagram identifies Scotland's key strategic hubs and connections (Strategic Maritime Routes, Strategic Travel Connections, the Blue Economy zone, Transmission Infrastructure, Cities, and Major Ports), and also critical national strategic programmes, including, but not limited to: Blue and Green Networks, 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, Active Travel Networks, Digital Fibre Networks, and National Developments.

The Sustainable Places Principle is concerned with changing the way in which we use our land and buildings, to ensure every decision contributes to achieving future net zero, nature-positive places that are more resilient to the impacts of climate change and help support the recovery and restoration of our natural environment. The overall aim of the Strategy is to help Scotland's places thrive sustainably within the Earth's limits, whilst maximising new opportunities for the economy and well-being through a 'Just Transition' and nature-positive approach.

It particularly encourages low-and zero-carbon design and energy efficiency, reducing the need for unsustainable modes of travel, and expanding and diversifying our renewable energy generation. It also promotes sustainable design and use of resources. The Strategy seeks to achieve multiple benefits for our people, places, and environment through investing in nature-based solutions.

Q1. Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future net zero places which will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and support recovery of our natural environment?

Generally, agree that this approach will help to facilitate the delivery of more resilient future net zero places, and support the recovery of our natural environment, but only if the interconnections between different themes are recognised, and the policy landscape is aligned across different topics to avoid conflicts. Furthermore, the solutions will need to be designed and implemented in a manner which seeks to achieve multiple benefits by all parties. The default position needs to be a desire and ambition to achieve many benefits for all, and not just a minimum standard tick box approach. A co-design and partnership working approach will be vital to achieving this. In addition, success will be dependent on a culture/mindset change, and developers and landowners will need help understanding or be persuaded by the opportunities and benefits to such an approach if they are to sign up to it.

Specifically, the policy to deliver low- and zero-carbon design and energy efficiency needs to be aligned with other national policies for heat decarbonisation including LHEES, Heat Networks Bill and Delivery Plan and LAEP policies and guidance. This is to ensure we can scale up at the rate and degree required to progress towards targets, in a joined-up manner that reflects whole system energy planning.

Polices and spatial strategies for low carbon transformation, sustainable travel, renewable energy, and nature-based solutions need to be evidenced, and an effort needs to be made to pair policy with effective information development and maintenance to support nature-based solutions at an appropriate scale which recognises trade-offs and seeks to optimise benefits and opportunities delivered.

Detailed comments

The National Spatial Strategy diagram on page 5 of the document fails to show the connection between Perth and Stirling, suggesting that Perth – Stirling – Glasgow is not a ‘Strategic Connection.’ Recommended that this is reviewed and updated to reflect the strategic transport connections between these cities.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Liveable Places

Summary - page 7

The Liveable Places Principle seeks to achieve future places, homes and neighbourhoods which are “...better, healthier and more vibrant places to live.” It aims to ensure the communities in which we live are inclusive, empowered, safe and resilient; helping people to be healthy, active, creative, and diverse, and to grow up to realise their full potential, feeling loved, safe, and respected.

It reflects on the Covid-19 pandemic as having highlighted longstanding inequalities, and the need to address this along with eliminating discrimination and creating better places and conditions for lifelong health and well-being, as well as restoring biodiversity and strengthening our future resilience.

The Strategy looks to create places with good-quality homes close to local facilities and services via the 20 minute neighbourhoods approach, and hopes to empower more people to help shape their places.

Q2. Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places, homes and neighbourhoods which will be better, healthier and more vibrant places to live?

Agree overall with the principles of this approach and what it seeks to achieve, however, this is an area where the aspirations go beyond the planning system and begs two questions - Are the other players signed up? And why is NPF4 not a National Plan for Scotland rather than a planning document.

The creation of high-quality places and homes with local facilities, services, and multi-functional spaces close by will undoubtedly lead to positive impacts upon the health and well-being of our communities, including how people value, connect with and use their places and spaces. It will also help build future resilience for communities considering our changing climate and the challenges that will bring. However, notwithstanding the cultural, societal, public health, economic and other changes out with the realms of land use planning that this will require to exact the desired change, in land use terms this may prove difficult in practice as a retrofit process for those existing areas where the high street is already in a state of decline, and there is a lack of local facilities to serve the current population in that locality, but where we seek to add more housing development to meet the housing land requirements of an area. A multi-stakeholder approach with significant investment in the necessary key infrastructure up front (via an infrastructure-first approach) to sustain existing and future communities will be critical to make this work in those places. It is also important that local authorities are equipped with the policy and guidance necessary to implement these aspirations for existing places, homes, and neighbourhoods, as well as those to be delivered in the future.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Productive Places

Summary – page 8

The Productive Places Principle is concerned with improving economic, social, and environmental well-being to help Scotland be globally competitive, and to deliver an inclusive and sustainable economy, with thriving and innovative businesses, quality jobs and fair work for the benefit of everyone and every place in Scotland. Green investment is highlighted as a key priority for the coming years.

The Strategy highlights ongoing changes to the way we work and the need to be flexible to facilitate future business and employment that benefits communities and improves places. It encourages development that “...*supports the prosperity of key sectors, builds community wealth and creates fair work and green jobs where they are most needed.*”

The details regarding Covid-19 recovery and building a sustainable economy longer term are to be dealt with in a new National Strategy for Economic Transformation, but planning is seen as having a role in contributing the delivery of this in respect of short-term recovery, as well as the longer term just transition to a “*net zero, nature-positive economy.*”

Q3. Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places which will attract new investment, build business confidence, stimulate entrepreneurship and facilitate future ways of working – improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing

Agree that this approach has the potential to improve economic, social and environmental wellbeing, but it will be a real challenge to ensure that it benefits everyone and every place in Scotland. Delivery of a Just Transition will be essential to ensuring that parts of society aren't left behind. It is also important to recognise skills and knowledge gaps for 'Green Jobs' and make the necessary connections to deliver the relevant opportunities for education, retraining and upskilling.

The pandemic has provided greater flexibility for industries and employees linked to virtual connectivity, but we need to ensure our approach to facilitating and supporting this through development and infrastructure provision safeguards our places so that they remain liveable, vibrant, and productive. It will require a different mindset, particularly around town centre uses and rural enterprises.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Distinctive Places

Summary – page 9

The Distinctive Places Principle aims to ensure that people value, enjoy, protect and enhance their environment as a result of achieving future places which are distinctive, safe, pleasant, welcoming, and easy to navigate, but that are also nature-positive and resource efficient.

The Strategy recognises the richness and high quality of Scotland's natural and historic environment but highlights that there are challenges that need tackling in some parts of the country. As such there may be a need for changes at local, regional, and national scales to address inequalities, make more efficient and fairer use of our assets, and to respond to the dual climate and ecological crises, by keeping nature recovery and blue green network connections at the centre of our future places.

It advocates a place-making, design-led approach to new development to build better places, as well as: the reshaping of future city and town centres, the reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings, enhancement, restoration and safeguarding of our natural and cultural heritage, creation of new rural opportunities, and the alignment of onshore development with national and regional marine plans.

Q4. Do you agree that this approach will deliver our future places which will be distinctive, safe and pleasant, easy to move around, welcoming, nature-positive and resource sufficient?

Yes, agree with this approach. However, it's success will very much rely on a multi-sector cooperative approach that ensures our places deliver multiple benefits. A greater understanding and awareness is required in terms of the Natural Capital.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Distinctive Places

Summary – page 9

As per summary provided under Question 4.

Q5. Do you agree that the spatial strategy will deliver future places that overall are sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive?

The Spatial Strategy includes the right key strategic elements to deliver future sustainable, liveable, productive, and distinctive places. However, the devil will very much be in the details in specific areas as to whether delivery is achievable across the country, and whether the enabling legislative framework provides sufficient powers to ensure its delivery. Significant investment in resources and infrastructure will also be required.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Spatial Principle for Scotland 2045

Summary – page 10

This section of the document recognises that collectively we need to make the right choices about where development should be located. It highlights that no single policy or development will deliver upon sustainable, liveable, productive and distinctive places, and as such Draft NPF4's strategy and policies are based on the six overarching principles of:

- a) **Compact Growth** – limiting urban expansion through the efficient reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and buildings. Safeguarding land for the future provision of services and resources. Reducing the need for unsustainable travel and strengthening local living by increasing the density of settlements.
- b) **Local Living** – creating networks of 20-minute neighbourhoods, supporting local living, reducing the need for unsustainable travel, promoting and facilitating active travel, improving access to services, decentralising energy networks, and building local circular economies. Cleaner, safer, and greener places with improved open spaces will be an integral part of this, as too will be virtual connectivity.
- c) **Balanced Development** – supporting development across the country so people have greater choice about where they live, learn and work. Help create opportunities to reverse past rural decline and manage demand more sustainably in other areas under pressure.
- d) **Conserving and Recycling Assets** – planned development which reflects the distinctive character and identity of places and makes best use of our assets, as well as protecting and enhancing those assets for future generations. Focus is on the productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in embedded carbon, minimising waste and supporting the transition to a circular economy.
- e) **Urban and Rural Synergy** – the Strategy seeks to bring together the contributions of our cities, towns, villages and countryside areas to achieve shared objectives and create better places; including improved green infrastructure to connect people with nature, building resilience and aiding biodiversity growth and recovery.
- f) **Just Transition** – ensuring that in reducing our emissions and responding to a changing climate we do so fairly and create a better future for everyone. The Strategy builds on the capacity of communities to work together to find local solutions, to ensure local people are more able to shape their places and transition to net zero and more environmentally sustainable ways of living.

Q6. Do you agree that these spatial principles will enable the right choices to be made about where development should be located?

The six overarching principles are a comprehensive package for identifying what future Scottish sustainable, liveable, productive, and distinctive places should and could look like, but as with Question 5 the reality of whether or not this can be implemented will be heavily reliant on the detailed policy and planning powers which planning authorities can use to achieve them, along with significant investment in resources and infrastructure.

Delivery of the principles on the ground will also need a holistic, cooperative and codesigned approach from all relevant parties and a real culture change.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Action Areas for Scotland

Summary – page 11

The diagram and associated text on page 11 of Draft NPF4 splits Scotland into 5 action areas: North and west coastal innovation; Central urban transformation; Northern revitalisation; North east transition, and Southern sustainability. The split is supposed to recognise the unique contribution each of these geographical areas can make to delivering the overall spatial strategy to build a better future.

Q7. Do you agree that these spatial strategy action areas provide a strong basis to take forward regional priority actions?

The action areas appear to align with Scottish Cities Alliance agendas and City Deals for the country's network of cities. However, there are concerns about the branding or badging of specific areas which could result in a negative self-limiting outcome for others. It might be more appropriate to provide details regarding aspirations and opportunities for delivering the vision for the future of the country under each of these brands (innovative, revitalised, transformed, transitioning, sustainable) and allow all areas to reach their potential.

Detailed comments

- Concerned with the undefined, overlapping boundaries of these 'Action Areas.' Support HOPS response regarding the removal of Strategic Development Plans and introduction of Regional Spatial Strategies under the 2019 Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act, coupled with unclear/undefined and overlapping boundaries associated with these 'Action Areas', presents real difficulties in terms of their status in decision-making processes.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – North & West Coastal Innovation

Summary – page

This area is broadly made up of the island communities of Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, and parts of Highland and Argyll and Bute, including the north and west mainland coastline.

Q8. Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?

No comments, Action Area doesn't include Perth and Kinross.

Detailed comments

None.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – North & West Coastal Innovation

Summary – page 15

This area is broadly made up of the island communities of Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles, and parts of Highland and Argyll and Bute, including the north and west mainland coastline.

Q9. What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?

None - does not cover the Perth and Kinross Area.

Detailed comments

General comments regarding the strategic actions for this area:

- Reference on page 15 to reversing depopulation – this is not just about numbers, but also about having a balanced age structure to sustain local services.
- Reference on page 21 to affordability of housing, fuel and transport poverty also apply to much of Highland Perth and Kinross.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Northern Revitalisation

Summary – page 10

This area broadly includes Highland with parts of Argyll and Bute, Moray and much of the national parks. There are links west and north to the island communities. This part of Scotland is highlighted for the strong contribution it can make towards meeting net zero targets and a nature positive country through demonstrating how natural assets can be managed and used to secure a more sustainable future. Within this area the aim is to:

- Strengthen networks of resilient communities
- Stimulate green prosperity
- Nurture nature-based solutions, and
- Strengthen resilience and decarbonise connectivity.

Q10. Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?

Yes, in so far as it concerns parts of Highland Perthshire.

Detailed comments

- The implication from the diagram on page 11 is that rural Perth and Kinross, the Cairngorms National Park, and the rural Stirling area are within the Central Urban Transformation area however, it says very little about the rural areas. Query whether we need the Central Urban Transformation area to cover these?

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Northern Revitalisation

Summary – page 21 – 24

As per the summary provided under Q10.

Q11. What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?

Agree with the strategic actions and summary of challenges and opportunities for this area but have concerns regarding the planning powers available to facilitate delivery of ambitions for the future of the area without it resulting in a piecemeal, tick box approach which will lead to detrimental impacts on important natural and cultural assets. A marked change in attitude and approach to recognising the benefits of nature-based solutions and delivery of high-quality development in places to ensure the achievement of multiple benefits is critical across all stakeholders. Much work is required in terms of education, awareness and understanding. Working with communities to understand their needs and ambitions for their place will also be key, especially to achieve their support and implementation. A two-way flow of interaction, engagement and idea and knowledge sharing discussions from Regional Land Use Partnerships down to community developed Local Place Plans and back up the chain will be crucial.

Detailed comments

None.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – North east Transition

Summary - page 25

This area broadly includes Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire with links through Moray towards Inverness, and south towards the Tay Estuary. The key points identified in respect of the area are:

- A centre for the skills and expertise needed to meet Scotland's climate change commitments
- Potential to move industry and business away from the oil and gas sector towards a cleaner, greener future via a just transition.
- High levels of car ownership in Aberdeenshire; emissions in the area mainly generated from transport, industrial and commercial activities and domestic properties.
- Land and forestry provide carbon sequestration.
- Significant parts of the coast will be vulnerable to the future effects of climate change.
- Amongst the most prosperous parts of Scotland, but has experienced significant economic challenges in recent years, and has pockets of deprivation.
- A mix of urban and rural communities - parts of the area have seen population decline, but several settlements around Aberdeen have grown.
- Affordability and housing choice remains a challenge and contributes to a housing driven disadvantage within Aberdeen.
- Population of retired people living in Aberdeenshire project to grow by 43% by 2043.
- Lower levels of educational attainment and limited access to services for communities along the Aberdeenshire and Moray coast.
- Existing high-quality built, natural and cultural assets already contribute to health and wellbeing in the area and can form the basis of a transition to net zero.
- Some of Scotland's highest quality agricultural land is concentrated here.
- The area's economy benefits from a strong fishing industry and globally significant energy sector – dominance of these sectors along with wider changes such as Covid-19 pandemic, EU Exit and global markets means economic diversification and repurposing of buildings and infrastructure are likely to be key priorities.

In this area Draft NPF4 seeks to:

- Transition to net zero
- Improve local liveability
- Regenerate coastal communities, and
- Decarbonise connectivity.

Q12. Do you agree with this summary of challenges and opportunities for this action area?

Yes, in so far as it relates to parts of Perth and Kinross and the strategic connections within and out of the area.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – North east Transition

Summary – page 27 – 28

As per summary provided under Q12.

Q13. What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?

Largely agree with the actions identified for the area but have reservations about achieving them in practice.

Transition to net zero - Much work is required regarding identification of skills gaps and opportunities to meet them. Partnership approach involving business and industry, and education sectors will be crucial to meeting those needs. Opportunities to work with universities (including University of the Highlands and Islands) to deliver targeted programmes of learning and vocational 'green jobs' courses should be explored.

Improving Local Liveability - Agree with the principles of 20-minute neighbourhood but have concerns as to how difficult these will be to achieve in practice for existing places which are already experiencing capacity issues with community facilities and services, and where there has been a decline on the high street. As previously highlighted Planning Authorities will require strong powers through planning policy framework to enforce this and both a cultural and mindset change are needed across all stakeholders. We will need to look closely at our current town and city centres and adapt our approaches to meet current and future needs, demands and consumer habits. Significant investment in resources and infrastructure will also be required to deliver.

Fully support the commitment to building with nature through the creation of multifunctional blue and green networks and improving green spaces and the connections between them and the wider active travel networks. These will be key to making our places and communities more resilient to our changing climate and the future challenges this will bring. Again, as with other strategic actions it will require a change in approach and mindset across all stakeholders to recognise the potential opportunities associated with delivering such spaces and connections for multiple benefits. We need to move away from site specific focus to more strategic, landscape scale and cross-boundary approach where appropriate. The approach to collecting and using developer contributions may require a review to reflect this also. Although, this will require Planning Authorities to have a strategic spatial framework in place for targeting of actions and projects to deliver network enhancements and mitigation measures. Strong support from the Scottish Government downwards will be vital to ensuring developers sign up to this agenda, understand the benefits to be realised and deliver upon.

Decarbonise connectivity - In terms of actions to improve journey times and capacity between Aberdeen and the Central Belt it is important not to lose sight of the needs and demands of intermediate stations along the network also. Appreciate the desire to speed travel up between major cities but those who make short journeys, usually commuters, need viable, reliable network options to entice them out of their cars and onto public transport. Connection issues, service changes which ultimately make journeys less appealing, delays and cancellations are becoming a discouraging factor for commuters which will undermine the aim to move away from private car use to achieve net zero.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Central Urban Transformation

Summary – page 29 – 20

This area broadly covers central Scotland from the Glasgow City Region and the Ayrshires in the west to Edinburgh City Region in the east, including the Tay Cities, the Forth Valley and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The section highlights the need to make significant changes to the densely populated central belt area of Scotland if we are going to achieve our climate change commitments; through reducing our emissions, decarbonising our buildings and transport, tackling congestion, making more efficient use of our existing land and buildings, connecting to renewable heat and electricity networks, and create more inclusive, greener, and sustainable places for the future.

In this area Draft NPF4 seeks to:

- Pioneer low-carbon, resilient urban living
- Reinvent and future-proof city centres
- Accelerate urban greening
- Rediscover urban coasts and waterfronts
- Reuse land and buildings
- Invest in net zero housing solutions
- Grow a wellbeing economy
- Reimagine development on the urban fringe, and
- Improve urban accessibility.

Q14. Do you agree with this summary of challenges & opportunities for this action area?

Agree to a large degree with the summary of challenges and opportunities, but also believe there is an opportunity in this area, particularly within Perth and Kinross, like that in the North East, for the reskilling of workforce and identifying and meeting skills and education and knowledge gaps linked to 'green jobs.' For example, linked to low carbon energy technology installation, peatland restoration, natural flood risk management, tackling the biodiversity crisis, and afforestation, considering the natural assets within the environs of some of the cities.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Central Urban Transformation

Summary – page 32 -38

As per summary provided under Question 14.

Q15. What are your views on these strategic action for this action area?

Largely agree, but as with Question 14, only if they are supported by resources, and in some cases enabling legislation.

Pioneer low-carbon, resilient urban living – Agree with this strategic action, but have concerns about its implementation on the ground within existing places. A culture change and new approach to consider these areas will be required as well as significant investment in both resources and infrastructure to make it happen.

Reinvent and future proof city centres - Mostly agree with strategic actions identified for the area. However, in terms of Perth I think it's also worth noting ongoing important work to deliver local heat and energy networks for the city and make Perth the 'Biodiversity Capital of Scotland.'

Accelerating urban greening – Fully support this strategic action for the area, but as commented before it will require a change in approach and mindset across all stakeholders to recognise the potential opportunities associated with delivering such spaces and connections for multiple benefits. In addition, Planning Authorities will need all stakeholders playing their part as well as strong support from the Scottish Government to ensure developers sign up to this agenda, understand the benefits to be realised and deliver upon. As with the other actions significant investment in both resources and infrastructure will be necessary.

Reuse land and buildings – Fully support this action. Agree with the statement that *“a combination of incentives, investment and policy support for productively reusing brownfield land and buildings at risk will be required to steer development away from greenfield locations.”* Planning Authorities will also need strong and robust powers to enforce this for incidences where building and landowners do not comply and where unlawful demolition occurs.

Invest in net zero housing solutions – Fully support this action. Developers will need persuading to recognise the benefits of more sustainable nature-based solutions and how they can not only contribute to tackling climate change and achieving net zero, but also how they can improve the health and wellbeing of a community, as well as future opportunities, and make their developments and the surrounding area more attractive. However, to have the desired effect, these measures cannot be applied in a minimum standard, tick box or “greenwashing” approach, they need to take a whole site and beyond approach to be meaningful. Furthermore, it should not be possible for agreed natural solutions to be squeezed or chipped away at later down the line to improve upon profit margins via applications to vary conditions. Planning Authorities will require the necessary policy support to enforce these features and measures.

Reimagine development on the urban fringe – Fully support this action. These green areas and natural spaces on the outskirts of our urban areas are extremely important assets which should be protected and where appropriate enhanced to provide a range of benefits to neighbouring populations. Landscape capacity studies will be important to identifying important assets and features for protection as well as opportunities for enhancement and innovation. Ensuring the relevant active travel infrastructure and connections are in place to provide access to these spaces will also be important to their continued use and enjoyment. There is a real opportunity to introduce outdoor educational resources too particularly linked to nature-based solutions.

Improve urban accessibility – Fully support this action, however significant investment will be required to ensure alternatives to the private car are available, not just in Glasgow and Edinburgh,

but in the other cities within the Central Urban area. This includes active travel links, EV charging networks, and viable and reliable public transport system. Active and low carbon travel options need to be easy and attractive if we are to achieve the required modal shift.

Detailed Comments

- Diagram on page 31 appears to suggest Perth is within the Central Scotland Green Network, which it is not. Furthermore, the strategic route between Perth – Stirling – Glasgow has not been shown.
- Pages 33- 34 re Accelerate urban greening: reference should be made to the Perthshire Nature Connections Project as well as biodiversity city, towns and villages network.
- Page 38 – Landscape-scale opportunities should not be limited to the National Parks.

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Southern Sustainability

Summary

This area broadly includes Dumfries and Galloway and The Scottish Borders, with links to the Ayrshires and Glasgow City Region in the west and to the Edinburgh City Region in the east.

Q16. Do you agree with this summary of challenges & opportunities for this action area?

No comments – area does not include Perth and Kinross.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – Southern Sustainability**Summary**

As per summary provided under Question 16.

Q17. What are your views on these strategic actions for this action area?

No comments – area does not include Perth and Kinross.

Detailed comments

None

Part 1 – National Spatial Strategy – General

Summary

The National Spatial Strategy contained within Draft NPF4 is described as a shared vision to guide future development in Scotland in a manner that reflects the Scottish Government's overarching spatial principles. It sees each part of Scotland as being able to contribute to achieving that vision, and also as having the potential to be planned and developed to create sustainable places, liveable places, productive places, and distinctive places.

Q18. What are your overall views on this proposed national spatial strategy?

Overall, it is difficult not to agree with the proposed National Spatial Strategy. It says the right things and if implemented would no doubt deliver upon the desired outcome of a sustainable, liveable, productive, and distinctive Scotland. However, there are genuine concerns as to how difficult it will be to deliver on the ground many of the actions to the benefit of everyone and everywhere, without significant investment in people, places, and infrastructure; joined up collaborative working, alongside a culture change and different approach by all stakeholders. Planning Authorities will require a robust and enforceable policy framework and local authorities and communities generally will need the necessary resources and investment backing to help make it happen. Strong support nationally and locally will be vital to implementation, whether that is via the local decision-making process with Elected Members or through the planning appeals processes.

Some additional work is required in the document around the interconnections between the four themes and how they can work together to deliver better places for people and nature.

Detailed comments

None

National Development Part 2

Part 2 – National Development

Summary – pages 44 – 56

Draft NPF4 identifies National developments as “*significant developments of national importance that will help deliver our spatial strategy.*” Eighteen national developments are proposed within the document, ranging from single large scale projects or collections and networks of a number of smaller scale projects. The intention is that these developments will act as exemplars of the place principle and placemaking approaches.

In taking forward national developments delivery partners are expected to meet a range of criteria including - support community wealth building; adapt to and mitigate for the potential impacts of climate change; improve biodiversity and restore habitats; consider how the development interacts with heat provision in the surrounding area and how it can connect with a LHEES and emerging plans for the heat sector, and ensure transport solutions connecting into and out of the development are in line with sustainable transport and sustainable investment hierarchies.

Designation of national developments does not mean that the proposals are exempt from later consenting processes – appropriate consents and associated impact assessments will still be required in line with statutory obligations.

Q19. Do you think that any of the classes of development described in the Statements of Need should be changed or additional classes added in order to deliver the national development described?

None

Detailed comments

- (Page 47) The Perth & Kinross Council area is not within the Central Scotland Green Network as is suggested in the National Developments figure on page 47 (Liveable Places 1.) and the Central Urban Transformation figure on page 31.
- (Page 49) Query whether urban sustainable drainage solutions should apply to all cities? Or further afield, instead of just to the city and wider catchment areas of Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- (Page 59) Delivery of this national development will (or at least should) be informed by *environmental considerations* alongside the already-recognised considerations of market, policy and regulatory developments and decisions.

Part 2 – National Development
Summary – page 44 – 66 As per summary provided under Question 19.
Q20. Is the level of information in the Statements of Need enough for communities, applicants and planning authorities to clearly decide when a proposal should be handled as a national development? Yes. As an additional comment it would be helpful to include in NPF4 recognition of, and encouragement for, the potential to replicate some of these national developments in other parts of Scotland building on experience gained for specific projects/developments for example, Central Scotland Green Network, and Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Drainage Solutions.
Detailed comments None.

Part 2 – National Development

Summary – page 44 – 66

As per summary provided under Question 19.

Q21. Do you think there are other developments, not already considered in supporting documents, that should be considered for national development status?

The following projects within Perth and Kinross are recommended for consideration for national development status:

Electric A9 - Work with Transport Scotland to deliver the Electric A9 project.

Regional Logistics, Fulfilment and Business Innovation Park, Perth (Part of Perth West) - A significant development opportunity that features in the Scottish Government's capital investment prospectus and which subject to a robust business case, the UK Government commits to invest up to £5 million in on-site infrastructure. The Perth West Eco Innovation Park will offer 20 hectares of serviced plots with a smart infrastructure backbone to support eco innovation investment and business growth. It will include a clean energy transport hub and innovation highway and will focus on logistics, advanced manufacturing energy systems, research and Innovation/education, and mobility services transport.

As part of this proposal investigate options and costs in connection with the creation of a Perth City Centre freight consolidation centre, which would reduce the emissions from large vehicles having to enter Perth City centre, with 'last mile' deliveries via low carbon vehicles.

Perth – The Biodiversity Capital of Scotland - The Perth City Leadership Forum has a vision to make Perth the most sustainable small city in Europe and as part this to make Perth the Biodiversity Capital of Scotland.

Restoring, regenerating, and enhancing Perth's biodiversity will help address the twin climate and nature crisis and the need for a step change in action to overcome this. The twin crises of nature loss and climate change are entwined and this workstream to support nature in Perth will also help mitigate the effects of climate change.

There has been a severe decline in Scotland's biodiversity in the last 25 years and the following sets out our strategy for delivering a step change for action to restore and enhance biodiversity in Perth.

The Forum's mission is to *"cement Perth as the Biodiversity Capital of Scotland through the delivery of ambitious nature rich projects with multiple benefits of all. Our projects will support an enhanced, resurgent natural environment characterised by biodiversity and attractive places to secure the wellbeing of our communities and planet for generations to come."*

Perth Smart Energy City Programme – The Programme aim is to make Perth one of the first UK cities to be net zero using smart and off grid energy systems. It includes a series of related projects to generate renewable energy, store energy and decarbonise Perth city's infrastructure, buildings, transport and heating systems and services at the pace necessary to meet climate change targets.

Detailed comments

See above.

National Planning Policy Part 3

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places

Summary - Page 68 This section sets out the purpose of policies 1-6 as universal policies to “achieve a net zero, nature-positive Scotland setting climate change and nature recovery as the primary guiding principles.” The Place Principle is emphasised.

Q22. Do you agree that addressing climate change and nature recovery should be the primary guiding principles for all our plans and planning decisions?

Yes. Climate change and nature recovery should be the primary guiding principles. Wording should reflect the twin crises. “helping” biodiversity should be replaced with the need to protect, restore and enhance biodiversity.

Sustainable development as supported by policy 1 should also be a guiding principle for all planning decisions. Sustainable development encompasses so much more than the twin crises and this is reflected but not expressly stated in the second paragraph where the Place Principle is referenced. This needs to be strengthened by reference to Scotland’s national outcomes and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Detailed comments

There is concern that the overlapping nature policies particularly policy 3 nature crisis, policy 12 green and blue infrastructure (excluding the play element), policy 32 natural places are in three different sections of the document. While the incorporation of nature into many of the other policies is supported, these policies relate directly to each other and need to be able to be read together and would therefore be better placed sequentially in one section. Policy 3 could be a general statement similar to (and potentially incorporated into) policy 2.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 1 – Plan-led approach to sustainable development.

Summary – page 68

Policy reconfirms that the purpose of planning is to manage the use and development of land in the long term public interest, contribute to Scotland’s national outcomes and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Q23. Do you agree with this policy approach?

Response - Welcome the alignment of NPF4 with national outcomes and UN SDG goals, and the overall aim of the Policy to ensure LDPs manage the use and development of land in the long term public interest. However, is this more a statement/principle/aim rather than a policy? It would also be helpful if the Scottish Government could articulate the UN SD Goals and National Outcomes relative to the aims, objectives, themes of NPF4. An update to the seven outcomes relationship wheel diagram in [Climate Ready Scotland: Second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024](#) (page 22) would perhaps assist with this. It might help with the decision-making process by establishing a tangible link between policy decisions back to national aims, and reduce the potential for inconsistency in the interpretation of relationships between NPF4 policies and national outcomes across various local authorities. Work also needs to be done to ensure evidence is accessible and shareable and an appropriate scale to support decision making and targeted actions to deliver these outcomes.

Detailed comments

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 2 – Climate Emergency

Summary – page 68 – 69

A new policy requires planning authorities to give significant weight to the global climate emergency when considering development proposals.

Q24. Do you agree that this policy will ensure the planning system takes account of the need to address the climate emergency?

Response - This policy sets out an overarching requirement to consider the Global Climate Emergency and also introduces new considerations/requirements. All development should be designed to minimise emissions over its lifecycle in line with decarbonisation pathways set out nationally. The Policy indicates that development proposals (on their own or when considered in combination with other proposals, allocations or consented development) that will generate significant emissions should not be supported unless suitable justification can be provided evidencing that the level of emissions is the minimum that can be achieved for the development to be viable and the proposed development is in the long-term public interest. For national, major or EIA development a new ‘whole-life assessment’ of greenhouse gas emissions should be accompanied with the submission, and emission off-setting measures may be considered where permission is minded to be granted with a focus on on-site measures (including nature-based solutions) where possible. The Policy also notes that development should build in climate change adaptation/mitigation measures and should generally be supported.

Whilst the overall principle of the policy is welcomed there are concerns around implementation with further clarity required around the scale of application and specific detail on standards and requirements around use of some of the terminology including: ‘significant weight should be given to the Global Climate Emergency’, ‘minimum that can be achieved for the development to be viable’, and ‘whole-life assessment’. There are also concerns around the need for a consistent, agreed set of criteria to support the policy as well as the additional time and resources required in terms of upskilling planners/decision-makers in this specialist role and potentially requiring consultancy support.

Detailed comments

Policy 2(a)

Generally agreed with overall principle of policy and emphasis given to the climate emergency, however difficulty is foreseen in its implementation. What is the definition of “significant weight” and on what scale or level is this applicable? Is it on a local, regional, national or global context?

Policies 2(b) & 2(c)

- It is difficult to foresee how planning authorities will be expected to assess whether development proposals will in fact minimise emissions over their lifecycle. Further guidance on *whole life assessment* will be required to support stakeholders in considering these assessments. A consistent, standardised approach with agreed criteria will be crucial to ensure that planning authorities/developers can take a unified approach to this issue using a consistent set of parameters/calculation methodologies. Even then Planning Officers will require training/ upskilling to be able to understand, interpret and determine adequacy of proposals submitted. This is very much a specialist role/skillset not necessarily available inhouse within local planning authorities. This is likely to result in an additional time and resource burden and potentially consultancy costs too. Any further guidance on this specific requirement should be consulted on with all relevant stakeholders.
- The level of detail in whole life carbon assessments should reflect the level of detail in the associated development proposal (i.e. higher-level assessments at the early engagement phase developing into detailed assessments for detailed specification and tendering).
- In terms of offsetting emissions, this is a largely new, uncertain, and unregulated area which will require local authorities to almost have a reserve of “shovel ready” carbon sequestration projects to direct developers interests to. Again, this puts an onus back on Planning Officers to be experts in another specialist field without any established evidence, guidance, or agreed criteria. It will also likely introduce additional work in the form of legal agreements to secure delivery.
- Under Policy 2(c) the onus should be on the developer/applicant to justify why any off-setting measures cannot be delivered on site. Heavier emphasis should be placed on nature-based solutions in terms of off-setting measures to support the wider principle of addressing the nature/biodiversity crisis.
- Policy 2(c) should also include requirements for local applications.
- Further detail is required to specify what is meant by the ‘*minimum that can be achieved for the development to be viable*’. Not that there aren’t other valid competing needs that should be met, but if they are not addressed up front, it will only be more expensive for the Council/public funding/individuals to retrofit at a later date, potentially expending further unnecessary embodied carbon.
- Given the types of developments (windfarm, peatland restoration, tree planting) and the nature of the landscapes these sit in, often historic and unimproved, that inclusion is made for the careful consideration and either protection or recording of historic assets to be impacted on by climate focussed developments.
- If as is stated addressing climate change should be the primary guiding principle, it should be that.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 3 – Nature Crisis

Summary – page 69 – 70

A new policy responding to the nature emergency requires plans and proposals to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity by identifying and supporting nature networks and requiring significant positive effects for biodiversity from large developments, and proportional positive effects from local development.

Q25. Do you agree that this policy will ensure that the planning system takes account of the need to address the nature crisis?

Yes. But the planning system needs to do more than just take account of the need to address the nature crisis. A crisis requires action to avert it. The intention of the detailed policy is supported, particularly the recognition of the importance of connectivity and corridors for nature as well as securing biodiversity net gain from development. The terminology and approach however needs to have enough weight to address the crisis, accord with best practice and use clear consistent terminology and certainty of delivery. For example it should be clear what nature is referring to in this policy, the first sentence referring to both biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery and restoration.

While a “universal” policy is supported to protect and provide additional biodiversity enhancement in all developments is supported, the detailed policy would be better grouped with other nature based policies scattered through NPF4. This will allow Plans and proposals to take a more holistic approach.

Detailed Comments

Policy 3(a).

The focus needs to be clearly on biodiversity protection, restoration and enhancement, not just biodiversity enhancement. Likewise while creation of new or restoration of networks, habitats, and populations are required, these and non designated priority habitats and habitat corridors also require protection.

The introduction of nature networks is welcome although the difference between nature networks and green networks needs to be clarified. It is also not clear Nature Networks are expected to be identified within Local Development Plans. Nature networks are stated to connect biodiversity rich areas but what this includes needs to be made clear including the implications for landowners. Identifying, protecting and connecting priority habitats, such as ancient woodland, and corridors outside of protected sites is important, and it needs to be clear what is included in nature networks, and the level of protection afforded. The protections in policy 3(d) given to nature networks– including OECMS – appear to give such areas equal status to local designations. Further information is required to be understand how this policy and others, such as Green Infrastructure interact. References to green infrastructure mapping, forest and woodland strategies and LBAPs would help consolidate the approach and make expectations on proposals is clear to ensure high quality proposals are deliver multiple benefits for people, places and wildlife. Further information is required on how Forestry and Woodland Strategies should co-ordinate or integrate Nature Networks.

Policy 3(b)

In accordance with the mitigation hierarchy development proposals must first avoid detrimental impacts and protect existing biodiversity before considering enhancement. The requirement on development proposals should be stronger and more defined.

Policy 3(c)

Minimisation of adverse impacts on biodiversity is no longer acceptable in a biodiversity crisis. The mitigation hierarchy should be clear in this general purpose paragraph; and be clear that all

proposals must adhere to it. Design must be based on an understanding of the environment. A requirement only to take into account the need to reverse biodiversity loss, is no longer adequate to move away from business as usual.

Policy 3(d).

A requirement for larger proposals to demonstrate conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is welcome. These requirements should also apply to local developments. Note that those requiring an AA might not be appropriate to align with the other large scale developments here as these can be small developments and the bar for requiring an AA is quite low.

The requirement for “they” to be in a demonstrably better state is ambiguous. As nature networks are included within the definition of biodiversity in this sentence, presumably it is biodiversity that is required to be in a demonstrably better state ?.

There is a concern that there is no definition of “demonstrably better state” and how this will be demonstrated. We now have enhancement, positive effects and better state. In the fourth bullet point the requirement changes to requiring “significant biodiversity enhancements in addition to any proposed mitigation”. A preference would be to have a consistent application of net gain for biodiversity, an internationally recognised term for which guidance is available through CIEEM, BSI and DEFRA with the level of netgain set out in planning policy. It is also impossible to demonstrate a better state than without intervention as this would be a moving baseline.

Policy 3(d) Bullet point 1

Proposals MUST be based on an understanding of the site, this applies to all developments including householders given the potential presence of protected species. The presence of sensitive, protected and priority habitats must be included in this, not just irreplaceable. This understanding must be based on expert advice.

Policy 3(d) Bullet point 2

Again the use of nature based solutions *wherever feasible* should be applied to all scales of development.

Policy 3(d) Bullet point 3

Developments including local developments MUST be supported by an assessment of potential negative effects. All developments (including householders where relevant) MUST mitigate in line with the mitigation hierarchy. This should be made clear in para 3(c).

If the intention of impacts being “fully mitigated” in line with the mitigation includes compensation this needs to be stated for clarity. A consequent amendment setting out when compensation is (and is not) appropriate would also be useful to avoid the temptation to default to compensation in pursuit of mitigation.

Policy 3(d) Bullet point 4

The requirement for significant biodiversity enhancements for major development is welcome as this recognises the increased opportunities for a larger site to provide significant improvements and resources. Use of a metric is the most transparent way to achieve “significant” enhancements rather than leaving it to judgement. It should be clear that enhancements are over and above “full mitigation” i.e. the additionality required by a net gain assessment.

Policy 3(e)

Local development should be required to adhere to the same net gain requirements as larger developments, especially the mitigation hierarchy and a proportionate net gain approach. A reliance on “enhancing” biodiversity allows for token measures without a full account of impacts. As stated above a proportionate assessment of net gain should be required. Householders should also be required to protect biodiversity and provide additional enhancements over mitigation where there is opportunity. i.e. as a proportionate response.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 4 – Human Rights & Equality

Summary – page 70

This policy sets out a generic commitment on planning to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and promote equality; along with the responsibility to consult and engage meaningfully and collaboratively.

Q26. Do you agree that this policy effectively addresses the need for planning to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality?

No. This is a principle rather than a policy and will not in itself achieve the ambitions set out in the question. A broad statement does not address structural inequality and discrimination and is unlikely to. Stating the overarching principle in 4(a) and its expression in engagement in 4(b) is worthy and incorporates Sustainable Development Goals and National Outcomes but is already expressly addressed by duties in human rights and equality legislation and the RTPI code of Conduct. Detail on consultation is rightly set out in development planning and development management regulations and guidance, and undertaken in accordance with planning best practice. Any concerns with this practice would be better dealt with through regulation and guidance than a planning policy.

Detailed Comments

If this principle is to be retained the wording should be stronger. In 4(a) Planning *has a duty* to respect etc. In (b) this should make it clear that opportunities should be provided for everyone to engage. Engagement in development decisions is not as realistic for everyone to engage. Early collaborative, meaningful engagement on planning decisions is better addressed through regulations and guidance than a policy. Careful consideration of planning decisions is not easily expressed in a simple policy as attempted in the last sentence. The objective of delivering in the long-term public interest without bias through considering a range of social, economic and environmental issues and reaching a balanced decision if the cornerstone of planning.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 5 – Community Wealth Building

Summary – page 71

This new policy requires national and major developments to contribute to community wealth building and requires that Development plans address community wealth building priorities by reflecting a people-centred approach to local economic development.

Q27. Do you agree that the planning policy should support community wealth building and does this policy deliver this?

Response – Welcome this in principle but NPF4 lacks detail on what Community Wealth Building (CWB) is, the clear links between it and land use planning, and how it is expected that CWB could be delivered via the land use planning system. Detailed guidance and good practice examples required.

Detailed comments

None

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Sustainable Places – Policy 6 – Design, Quality and Place

Summary – page 71

An updated policy on design, quality and place requires plans and proposals to reflect the six qualities of successful places.

Q28. Do you agree that this policy will enable the planning system to promote design, quality and place?

The policy is supported in general terms and the use to the 6 qualities of a successful place to demonstrate the key mechanisms that support quality design are welcomed. It helps to structure an approach to assessing planning applications and proposals in terms of design and siting, providing a very useful overview of the 6 qualities. This can clearly be used to audit proposals and identify areas for improvement.

However, using the term “should” suggests that it isn’t a definite requirement but just a preferred option. For planners to assess applications relying on this policy, arguing at appeal that someone “should” have done something isn’t the same as saying they must. It suggests that if they have a reasonable justification, they don’t need to adhere to the policy. Whilst this maybe the case with certain issues, this is certainly not one that we can continue to be ambiguous on. Poor design = discrimination and thus negates the very positive intentions of Policy 4 on human rights.

Detailed comments

Policy 6(a) provides a clear message about scale and nature of proposals – however, “contributes positively” is open to interpretation. What is a positive contribution?

Policy 6(b) refers to development proposals incorporating the key principles of several government documents and “any design guidance adopted by planning authorities and statutory consultees”. This covers a huge range of information, some of which might be inconsistent. There is a need to be specific about design guidance adopted by statutory consultees – this includes community councils and a range of other bodies. It could potentially create greater confusion over which guidance takes precedence.

Policy (c) refers to the 6 qualities of a successful place. This is probably one of the most helpful parts of the policy as it provides a clear outline of what these 6 qualities are. However, the term “contributes positively” maybe harder to determine.

Policy (d) & (e) provide development management with the tools to refuse an application. It will require published guidance to inform how these specific considerations will be assessed. For example, sunlight & privacy (18m rule) assessments. It should perhaps be caveated to acknowledge that some proposals not in compliance maybe supported if there is significant public benefit.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 7 – Local Living

Summary – page 73 – 74

A new policy on local living requires plans and proposals to support the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods. 20 minute neighbourhoods are a method of achieving connected and compact neighbourhoods designed in such a way that all people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle of their home.

Q29. Do you agree that this policy sufficiently addresses the need to support local living?

The concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods is supported. We agree the need to acknowledge where in new development, which is planned and delivered through a robust plan-led process, there is a requirement to examine the method of delivery of infrastructure and local amenities as part of those development proposals.

Accessible, mixed-use developments will help to create thriving and interesting places with the ultimate objective of creating sustainable development. Expectations for 20-minute neighbourhoods should be embedded in the Local Development Plan, using tools such as masterplans or development briefs to carry these ambitions through the planning process to delivery. This ensures that decision makers have an adequate policy basis to support proposals that meet these requirements and refuse those that do not.

The delivery of infrastructure to support 20-minute neighbourhoods remains one of the biggest obstacles to overcome. Infrastructure such as schools, healthcare facilities and opportunities for play & recreation all require investment and engagement with multiple stakeholders from the outset to embed these requirements in the Local Development Plan. The delivery of such infrastructure often falls to the local authority with support from planning obligations wherever possible, though a funding gap often remains as onerous obligations ultimately affect development viability.

Whilst the Council supports this approach, there are concerns that it will be difficult to achieve when combined with the very rural nature of parts of Perth & Kinross. Further clarity regarding how the policy will work in duality with the repopulation of remote areas is something that requires further thought and will not be achieved by planning alone. More guidance on collaboration and more resources will be required to demonstrate and action how a council can achieve this through partnership working.

Furthermore, the policy does also not acknowledge that much of the infrastructure required to create 20-minute neighbourhoods is in the hands of private business and therefore cannot be achieved without identifying resources to support public transport in areas where it is not profitable, shops in villages where the population do not support them because it's cheaper to get a supermarket delivery, the closure of banks, post offices, pubs and hotels etc. Further work in other sections of government need to focus on what we own publicly and what we should own publicly in order to facilitate this aspiration. Further understanding of how the rural/urban classification could be used to assess quantity, quality and accessibility to services in rural/remote areas where density doesn't support the 20-minute neighbourhood concept is required.

Decision makers will need support to uphold the vision for 20-minute neighbourhoods when considering the challenges of delivery.

Detailed comments

In terms of Policy 7(b) this appears to be an open-ended policy – an additional criterion should be added to require development proposals to adhere to all relevant policies within the plan, where these are linked to the LDP spatial strategy and particular development is discouraged e.g., green belt or to prevent growth in a particular settlement.

This policy requires close alignment with open space, recreational, green & blue infrastructure, local play opportunities and food growing policies and strategies.

Considerable work is required to support the digitisation and analysis of all this work. Council resources are limited in terms of data management and a national approach to this would make the approach for easier to implement and far easier for the public to understand.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 8 – Infrastructure First

Summary – page 75

A new policy requires local development plans and delivery programmes to be based on an infrastructure-first approach. Proposals must also reflect the Scottish Government Infrastructure Investment Hierarchy to use existing infrastructure capacity first, and mitigate their impact.

Q30. Do you agree that this policy ensures that we make best use of existing infrastructure-first approach to planning?

We support an infrastructure-first approach in a plan-led system.

Robust evidence from stakeholders on existing and forecasted infrastructure provision is crucial to delivering the local development plan and this is set out in the key principles of the “Infrastructure First” policy. Evidence from relevant agencies and strategies therefore needs to be accessible and up to date and the Investment Hierarchy implemented.

Policy 8 acknowledges that development proposals should mitigate their impacts on infrastructure and should not be supported unless such provision is made.

It is expected that economic challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit will continue to burden the development industry for some time. Local authorities do have the tools to respond to these challenges on a case-by-case basis wherever appropriate, however, deviating from the approach set out in Policy 8 will result in impacts upon infrastructure provision, and in turn, the communities that depend on it.

Many of the objectives set out in Draft NPF4 rely on infrastructure provision. There is a clear requirement for a policy position supporting an infrastructure-first approach. Embedding this approach in planning policy is the foundation for achieving the objectives of this Draft NPF4.

Detailed comments

In order to deliver this key aim and to ensure that development planning is suitably informed by infrastructure requirements, all relevant infrastructure providers need to buy-in to the LDP process (and feed in as necessary) with the Scottish Government having a leadership role here to ensure that this can be achieved.

There is concern with this in regard to infrastructure not under the control of the planning authority, and it may be that this will only work if infrastructure providers are required like SW to facilitate development. However, infrastructure operators should be aware of development plan targets in the area and offer a joined-up approach to delivering sustainable development and meeting said targets as well as forecasting infrastructure improvements or extra capacity to do so.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 9 – Quality Homes

Summary – pages 76-77

An updated approach to providing quality homes. This requires authorities to set out a deliverable housing land pipeline, encourages affordability and choice, recognises the accommodation needs of Gypsy / Travellers, and expects proposal for larger scale housing developments to be supported by a statement of community benefit. Proposals should be in sustainable locations and will only be supported if allocated in the local development plan, unless it is for affordable homes, small scale or rural development, or where there is evidence that build-out is exceeding the timelines set out in the delivery programme.

Q31. Do you agree that this policy meets the aims of supporting the delivery of high quality, sustainable homes that meet the needs of people throughout their lives?

Overall yes subject to some further clarification. Welcome the clarification of the MATHLR approach. Also welcome the reference to de-allocating sites which aren't delivering within agreed timescales, but more recognition needs to be placed on the fact that site delivery is largely in the hands of the industry and is something over which the LDP has limited control. The main concern is whether the policy set out in g) will actually assist in getting more sites for Gypsy / Traveller and Travelling Showpeople.

Detailed comments

Quality homes should also enable sustainable and net zero living through their design and promote resident health and wellbeing in design through material selection, layout, etc.

a) 'LDPs should identify a housing target...in the form of a Housing Land Requirement' – support but would suggest that a housing target and housing land requirement are two different things. LDPs can identify sites to meet an identified requirement but the meeting of a housing target i.e. the number of houses to be built on the ground is largely down to the house building industry. Consider this would be clearer if the reference to housing target was removed.

b) A 'deliverable housing pipeline' – clarity sought that the housing pipeline is the whole housing land requirement and that there is not an expectation that LDPs will identify land in excess of their requirement which can come forward if sites don't deliver within the plan period.

Support the suggestion that sites which aren't delivering as programmed will be de-allocated but question how this will be done. Will it need to be through a formal alteration or amendment of the LDP or will there be a more streamlined process? PKC currently use delivery strategies to monitor progress on sites in more detail than just annual phasing through the housing land audit but the level of engagement in this process from landowners / developers is mixed. If the NPF included a requirement for landowners / developers to engage in a process such as delivery strategies this would give more weight. It would be useful if NPF also made some reference for the need for landowners and developers to engage with the planning authority on the realistic programming of their sites through the annual housing land audit.

c) Support but how does the requirement for land to be allocated in sustainable places tie up with the aim of repopulating rural areas which are never going to be as sustainable as a spatial strategy which favours most development in the largest centres?

Support requirement to identify land for Gypsy/Travellers in LDPs. The current wording can be read as an addition to the requirement to allocate land to meet the Housing Land Requirement. There needs to be a clear requirement for identifying land where there is a need. As a minimum the phrase “as well as” in the last sentence should be replaced with “including”. However it should be clear what mechanism is to be used to identify need and deliverable land as HNDA is a blunt instrument inappropriate to this requirement. This assessment is best carried out at a national or at a minimum a regional level to take travelling into account. The identification of appropriate quality sites must be undertaken with consultation with the travelling community. Potential for the utilisation of brownfield sites for temporary stop overs in the future where short-term stays might be acceptable, but not full residential development.

e) Support proposal for a ‘statement of community benefit’ but requires further clarity e.g. how are 'local' housing requirements to be defined? Question whether the trigger of 50 homes is too high; smaller developments of say, 10, can have a significant impact on a small settlement or particularly sensitive location.

f) Cross-reference to criterion i) would clarify that proposals for new homes that improve affordability and choice should be supported on allocated sites unless meeting one of the exceptions listed.

g) The positive support for proposals is supported. However the qualification that this is “where a need is identified” is unnecessary and incompatible with policy 4 [referring to equality]. It is highly unlikely that a private site comes forward where a need is not identified, and this just creates an extra hurdle for a protected group to overcome. Such sites will typically be small sites of 5-10 pitches where an equivalent housing development in a settled community on unallocated sites would not be required to identify need under policy 9(i). The qualifications to this support would make easier reading if they were not phrased as a double negative. i.e. “proposals should be supported....where proposals...” rather than “proposals supported unless....not”.

It is not clear whether proposals are required to meet other policies in NPF4 or this policy supersedes them. Presumably policies such as those with regards to flooding and tree/woodland protection still apply. If so the first bullet point is redundant, if not then further requirements may be needed including a requirement for a safe environment (away from flood risk, noise and pollution with securable transit sites).

The intention behind the first bullet point is accepted, however “unacceptable” would be better replaced with a reference to meeting the relevant tests for the protected area or feature to ensure an objective approach. Development will not be able to be supported where it does not meet the relevant tests for statutory protections.

The second point would benefit from the addition of the word “safely”. Whilst longer stay sites would require permanent infrastructure / services, the servicing of a short stay site could be done on a temporary basis e.g. provision of portable toilets, waste containers etc with redirection to sanitation facilities elsewhere so this should not limit the options.

The third bullet point is more problematic and erodes the support initially expressed. For housing proposals policy 6(e) does not support “Proposals that are detrimental to the character or appearance of the surrounding area...in order to protect amenity”. The point in policy 9(g) would therefore be more equitable to remove impact on “amenity” and limit this to “surrounding area” to bring it into line. The use of the word “unacceptable” introduces a level of judgement and

removes the more objective criteria applied to housing. While this is limited by the following sentence requiring judgements to be limited to the proposal at hand, it would be more equitable for a more objective criterion to be used such as “significantly detrimental” or there is a risk that such sites will continue to be located in less desirable locations to please the ‘acceptability’ of others. Due to the low profile nature of caravans and chalets, any landscape / character impacts are able to be easily mitigated. This should be recognised or the whole bullet point reworded to “significant impacts on the character of the surrounding area cannot be adequately mitigated”.

h) Need to specify how the requirement is identified i.e. HNDA process. Should clarify that this is on allocated sites.

i) The exceptions at i) appear to cover most of the instances when this most often arises in PKC. Taking forward affordable housing developments on ‘opportunity sites’ have made a very beneficial contribution to supply in past years; however, will authorities have the flexibility to choose which of the exceptions to include?

j) The first bullet point should also refer to *siting* as a key consideration.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 10 – Sustainable travel and transport

Summary – pages 78-79

An updated policy on sustainable transport and active travel. This aims to reduce the need to travel by discouraging applications for significant travel generating uses at locations which rely on private car usage. Provision of active travel is actively encouraged.

Q32. Do you agree that this policy will reduce the need to travel unsustainably, decarbonise our transport system and promote active travel choices?

Overall yes, subject to clarification on some of the minor points and more support for rural areas. The policy is more applicable to urban areas and lacks a balanced approach to the types of improvements to sustainable travel and transport infrastructure improvements that benefit rural areas.

Detailed comments

Policy 10(b) not clear enough whether it is the plan or the strategy which needs appraised using DPMTAG.

Policy 10(e) should be about the whole transport network including all roads not just the strategic transport network.

Policy 10(g) suggests that new transport infrastructure can be an opportunity to incorporate blue and green infrastructure and nature rich habitats where possible. Pursuant to the biodiversity duty and the stated overarching principle this should be strengthened to a requirement wherever possible. i.e. must/should where possible.

Policy 10(h) is too urban focused.

Policy 10(i) residential developments in Scotland should provide sheltered cycle parking or space for residents to have shelter for their bicycles (e.g. garages or sheds). Non-sheltered spaces should only be for visitors. The cycle storage should be part of the development and not in nearby provision.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 11 – Heating & Cooling

Summary – page

An updated and expanded policy on heat and cooling requiring alignment with the area's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy. Proposals should be designed to connect with existing or future heat networks. Where there is no effective solution available, an alternative low or zero emissions heating system should be provided. Passive or natural solutions to cooling are encouraged.

Q33. Do you agree that this policy will help us achieve zero emissions from heating and cooling our buildings and adapt to changing temperatures?

Response - Policy 11 (heating & cooling) provides a comprehensive update on the previous SPP policy and important links are made to other key plans and strategies including Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies and the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021. Importance is placed on identifying the most appropriate heating strategy for the site which includes consideration of a range of low and zero carbon generating technologies. As with other policies the requirements around Policy 11 are potentially resource intensive and require to be adequately resourced, with upskilling of Planning Officers/decision-makers required. A number of other additional suggestions are made where clarifications would assist or where further guidance would benefit the implementation of the policy.

Detailed comments

Policy 11

The aim to help meet net zero objectives through the development of a strong policy framework and evidence base to support heat network zoning/delivery is welcomed. Supportive planning policy and site allocation – alongside other emerging duties in relation to LHEES and Heat Network Scotland Act 2021 – will strengthen the overall approach to delivering heat networks, where previously this was found to be more difficult. Any spatial policy to support HN zoning and delivery should be guided by the LHEES HN zoning and area based targeting approach to ensure that these strategies are aligned, particularly with input from all relevant stakeholders including DNOs on network investment and constraints, through iterative planning and engagement.

Welcome support for development proposals in areas where a heat network is planned but not currently in place. The policy should also provide conditional support where it is demonstrated that a cost-effective connection can be made at a later date where the proposal is within or adjacent to a HN. To support this objective detail is required to ensure evidence used to delineate HN zones is robust, accurate and current. HN zones should be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain feasible.

Heat decarbonisation targets should be informed by LHEES National Assessment work for heat networks to determine feasibility at a strategic level and define viable properties for connection and further reviewed to determine cost effectiveness with current funding and investment landscape.

It is considered there is a lack of cross referencing to Building Standards which will be one of the main regulatory mechanisms for this. This is a resource intensive developing policy area which

requires to be properly resourced. Again, upskilling of planners will be required to understand and make decisions on proposals submitted under this specialist topic.

Policy 11(a)

Support policy to facilitate the development of networks for low carbon heating and prioritisation of approval of HN schemes. The alignment of Development Plans with the outputs of LHEES/HN zoning is supported. HNzs should be delineated within the LHEES Strategy and Delivery Plans to ensure alignment with LHEES priorities including tackling fuel poverty to ensure heat decarbonisation solution(s) do not exacerbate or result in fuel poor households.

Scottish Government should clarify if there is a policy aim here to specifically encourage/identify new development (including allocations) to support areas identified as Heat Network Zones. Further guidance on how LDPs (particularly spatial implications) are expected to align with LHEES including HN zoning is required.

Policy should be broadened to equally enable the full range of low and zero carbon heating options ensuring the most appropriate pathway is considered in line LHEES/HN zoning process to ensure policy alignment. Support the recognition of LHEES in strategic energy planning as above consideration should be given to the most appropriate pathway for heat decarbonisation on the site and consider the development of HNs alongside other low and zero carbon heating options in line with LHEES guidance and whole energy systems planning. Essentially, any decarbonisation plans should identify the right solution in the right place guided principally by the LHEES and the LDP.

Policy 11(b)

Support the requirement for development proposals to be supported where they connect to existing heat networks. Proximity distance buffers for connection, cost effectiveness, technical feasibility and other constraints (listed buildings etc.) will need to be considered when determining requirement of buildings for retrofit to connect to existing heat networks.

Further guidance on *retrofit* proposals would be helpful to identify where there are requirements and where there are exceptions. PKC LDP Policy 34 currently identifies the following developments within or partially within HNzs to be exempt from the requirement to undertake a feasibility study: householder development; proposals for change of use (where there is no proposal to alter or replace an existing heating/hot water system); refurbishment/conversion under 500sqm (where there is no proposal to alter or replace an existing heating/hot water system). Passivhaus proposals are also considered to be exempt due to the reduced energy demand requirements associated with such developments.

Policy 11(c)

Clarification on what the term *planned* means i.e. does this include HNzs? Further technical guidance to support the consideration of future-proofing of new developments is required to assist both industry and planning authorities.

Policy 11(d)

Should this policy flag the forthcoming New Build Heat Standard in terms of aspirations on zero direct emissions heating?

Support requirement for development proposals to provide an alternative low or zero emissions heating system where heat networks connections aren't viable recognising issues with heat density requirement in rural/semi rural areas.

Policy 11(e)

Support the emphasis of co-location of waste heat facilities in areas of heat demand.

Sub-policy is generally supported however additional text should be added to read: 'National and major development with **waste or surplus heat** should be co-located in areas of heat demand *where possible* and are expected...'. There will be cases where there are other environmental or economic justifications for locating these developments where there may not be the opportunity to provide excess/waste heat to supply a network. Justification should be provided by the applicant to demonstrate this specific point.

The policy should also read: 'electricity *and/or* heat' rather than simply 'and' as this will depend on the nature of the development proposal.

Recovery of waste heat from sewage water using different types of heat pumps should equally be considered. Further research and additional detail is required to identify other options for renewable heat to support heat networks including GSHP/WSHP.

Policy 11(f)

This sub-policy should specifically make reference to sub-policy (a) in relation to LHEES and HN zoning. Extra text could be added to the first sentence at the end to read: 'heat maps and zoning for heat and energy efficiency *in line with sub-policy (a)* Specifically, they should be...'

Policy 11(g)

Clarification on any distances/buffers in relation to the statement 'where networked systems are available' would be helpful.

Policy 11(i)

Specific examples could be provided at the end of the sub-policy to provide context. For example, tree shading.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 12 – Blue & green Infrastructure Play & Sport

Summary – page 81

An updated policy on blue and green infrastructure, play and sport requires assets to be safeguarded and seeks opportunities for enhancement. New policies also protect children's outdoor play provision and design-in new opportunities for play in the built environment. Maintenance of blue-green infrastructure should also be addressed in development proposals.

Q34. Do you agree that this policy will help to make our places greener, healthier, and more resilient to climate change by supporting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure and providing good quality local opportunities for play and sport?

It's difficult to see how this policy will help to improve resilience to flood risk and climate change. The policy is virtually silent on these issues and how improvements would be delivered. The adoption of blue-green infrastructure is being promoted as the 'way forward' to address surface water flooding in urban areas. In reality, while it may help, it will not be able to deal with the immediate challenge posed by the increased prevalence of surface water flooding due to climate change. As well as blue-green infrastructure, all other potential means of dealing with surface water flooding in urban areas must therefore continue to be pursued (surface water management planning, SuDS, Scottish water improvements in combined sewer infrastructure, etc).

There are concerns that this new policy is trying to integrate two distinct areas, and that this could lead to confusion. There are definite linkages and an emphasis on the multifunctional nature of blue & green infrastructure is good, but it maybe isn't clear enough why these policies have all been placed together. More emphasis should be given to the value of people specifically being able access a range of outdoor space in terms of the educational and health value. Interaction with biodiversity, respect for their habitats can only be developed in conjunction with the education curriculum. There is concern that this approach will not provide clarity and will instead create confusion. Furthermore, there are nature networks, blue and green infrastructure, strategic green infrastructure, green networks and key green networks mentioned in the NPF4. It would help if the meaning of these is clear and simplified.

Green infrastructure is internationally defined as a network of natural and semi natural areas with other environmental features to deliver ecosystem services. The natural and multifunctional nature of GI is key and should not be equated to "open space". While the examples given of green and blue infrastructure in the introductory paragraph are supported the reference to "civic spaces" is not. This could be replaced with "semi-natural". The reference to net loss of existing blue and green infrastructure is supported. As noted with regards to policy 3, this will require mechanism for assessing this. However, the rest of the policy allows for a net loss of green infrastructure. Again, this does not support the "primary guiding principle" of the biodiversity and carbon crises. Any acceptable loss of green infrastructure should be compensated for.

Perhaps reference to public realm spaces should be incorporated and specified instead of the more ambiguous civic spaces. It is referenced later but should be clearer as a part of any strategy. These areas are often overlooked in towns and cities as places that can serve dual purposes - a pedestrianised high street, square or churchyard can often provide good opportunities for biodiversity, play and contemplative space. Highlighting urban opportunities to grow food, provide habitat and teach our children about nature are invaluable and should support outdoor access for those that have limited garden space.

Requirements for proposed blue/green infrastructure by type(s), quantity, quality and accessibility should be aligned with existing policies for open space accessibility and quality criteria where possible. Further detail on the approach to and evidence for assessment of quality and accessibility (distance thresholds) is required. Further detail on the typology used to access type requirements is required and should where possible align with Greenspace OS data (Greenspace Scotland) as standardised, maintained national dataset.

Detailed comments

Policy 12(a) recommends that Local Development Plans should identify and protect blue and green infrastructure and opportunities to expand – including through green networks. It should be clear where green infrastructure in the text includes green networks. Identifying green networks (and Nature Networks) in plans is supported in order to deliver other requirements of this policy. Suggest change of wording to best contribute to *protecting and enhancing green and blue networks and priorities*.

Policy 12(c) requires being paired with an appropriate evidence base to provide a mechanism by which development allocations can take account of green and blue networks and priorities as required. Assessment on the impact of the overall integrity of the network of blue and green infrastructure is dependent on the scale being considered (fragmentation at a landscape and or site-specific scale) and detail on how this will be assessed is required.

Policy 12(d) should also recognise the *amenity* value of regional and country parks.

Policy 12(h) Development proposals should incorporate and enhance blue and green infrastructure. “Incorporate “could (rightly) be taken to refer to existing green infrastructure. The word “provide” could be added to ensure that these three steps are taken when designing developments. The paragraph could be made clearer to ensure that development design starts from and builds on an understanding of the existing and potential green infrastructure provision and green networks rather than just “taking account of these”. The reference to connections with wider green networks for people and wildlife is supported. This condition would be strengthened if the objective of enhancing biodiversity was directly referenced. The reference to strategic and local scale G and B infrastructure is welcomed, although more detail is required to define these, particularly the importance of landscape scale networks to ecosystem services and the link to policy on ‘nature networks’.

Policy 12(l) requirement for the long-term stewardship of blue and green infrastructure is supported.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 13 – Sustainable Flood Risk & Water Management

Summary – pages 83 – 84

An updated policy on flooding aims to build resilience to future climate change. Proposals on the Future Functional Floodplain will not be supported other than in limited circumstances. New infrastructure must build in flood risk mitigation. Impermeable surfaces are discouraged, and proposals must use blue and green infrastructure where practicable for drainage of surface water.

Q35. Do you agree that this policy will help to ensure places are resilient to future flood risk and make efficient and sustainable use of water resources?

In general, no. Policy 13 is very light on detail and must be supported by further statutory guidance. It's not clear if this will be the case. The recent and current approach of 'slimming down' national planning policy is not well suited to flood risk management. Having a 'high level' set of principles is fine, but the approach must be supported by further detailed technical guidance and developers must adhere to this. The former Planning Advice Notes (PAN's) have been withdrawn, are out of date and have never been replaced with the consolidated PAN that was previously proposed. As a result, Perth and Kinross Council has developed its own Supplementary Guidance on Flooding and Drainage, but it is concerning to see that under NPF4 that this will no longer be statutory in nature. The general approach to Planning and Flooding is therefore undermined by NPF4, at a time when the approach to development and flood risk should be strengthened in order to tackle increasing flood risk due to climate change.

The existing SPP risk framework (paragraph 263 of the current SPP) has been removed. This was a useful tool, linking to SEPA's Land Vulnerability guidance document, and should be included in NPF4.

Detailed comments

Before giving detailed comments on the draft policy, there are omissions on the following that should be addressed as follows:

Avoidance of flood risk

The avoidance of flood risk is not promoted at the forefront of NPF4. While it is included, avoidance should be presented as the preferred way to manage flood risk. For example, the first paragraph of policy 13 refers to reducing the vulnerability of existing and future developments. Whilst this is a suitable approach for existing development, avoidance should be the first consideration for any future development.

Land raising is not mentioned within the policy. This is a positive step, however, there is no mention of the consideration of cumulative impacts in relation to flooding, or that piecemeal loss of the functional floodplain is to be avoided.

Links to Flood Risk Management Plans

There is no mention of how NPF4 will link up with other relevant policies/plans, and, in relation to flooding, Flood Risk Management Plans. These documents contain actions relevant to Planning, such as ensuring national and local policies are implementing to ensure flood risk is not increased as a result of new development.

Both local authorities and SEPA have been looking for ways to strengthen the links between Local Development Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans, however the proposed policy is silent on this. It would be useful to align both sets of plans and to include shared objectives and actions in both and to even align the publication of both in terms of timescales. Flood Risk Management Plans are currently published every 6 years with Local Development Plans moving to a 10 year cycle.

Use of should

The policy must be strengthened through the use of more appropriate language by replacing the frequent use of 'should' (e.g. "Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources.") with 'shall'.

Specific comments on the policy

P13a

The identification of natural flood management measures is a large task and funding will have to be provided to implement it. It is agreed that this is a good idea, but resources and legislation would be needed.

The policy notes that it "should also encourage the use of natural flood risk management to provide wider benefits for people and nature." This is generally accepted, but it is unclear from NPF4 how developers would actually deliver this, as it seems unlikely that they will be able to implement NFM in upstream catchments which will be remote from their development site. It is also unclear how NFM measures would be maintained in the future.

Local authorities can currently promote NFM measures under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act but the process is convoluted and lengthy, the funding streams are uncertain and the benefits (at least in terms of flood risk management) are limited. It would therefore be preferable for NFM measures to be promoted and funded directly in a similar way to the recently announced approach in England to re-wilding farmland.

The policy promotes the use of natural flood management (NFM) but doesn't make it clear what is meant by this, i.e. is this part of wider promotion of re-wilding/biodiversity improvements which can provide multiple benefits, such as carbon capture, habitat creation, etc., and potentially NFM?

The evidence base for NFM is currently not strong, particularly in regard to mitigating high magnitude flood events in larger catchments. It also needs to be considered in a catchment wide approach, as there can be unintended consequences that can actually increase flood risk (such as altering the timings of peak flows in watercourses). This is where NPF4 needs to clearly link with other plans/policies to ensure this happens.

NFM measures (or blue-green infrastructure) can also never be used to justify unsuitable development in areas of flood risk, and this should be reinforced within the policy.

The policy also needs to clarify how the assessment of NFM will be considered, i.e. will existing datasets be used to identify potential areas of suitability (i.e. SEPA NFM maps), or other means?

Natural flood management and blue green infrastructure are mentioned. These measures should only be about managing increasing risk to existing development and the policy should make it clear that this should not be used to justify new, unsuitable development in flood risk areas.

As noted in our general comments, who will be responsible for its long-term maintenance of these features? How would blue green infrastructure fit alongside SuDS adoption, such as Section 7 maintenance agreements?

Sewer flooding is not explicitly mentioned, although 13a does note that flooding from all sources should be considered.

There is an opportunity here to require development to provide betterment in terms of a reduction in flood risk. For example, for new post-development runoff rates should be lower than pre-development runoff rates, particularly in urban areas. This is increasingly important to help mitigate against increasing flood risk in future due to climate change.

The change in emphasis towards strengthening community resilience is welcomed. There is a limit to what the planning system and flood risk management can achieve, and communities must play a part in tackling flood risk.

13b

Future Functional Flood Plain

This is a change from existing SPP which is currently based on the functional flood plain, defined by the 1 in 200-year flood. The policy proposes that this will now be extended to the estimated 1 in 200-year flood in 2080. This is a positive shift to help further improve resilience against climate change impacts.

However, the policy remains unclear about the increase in flooding due to climate change. While reference is made to SEPA's flood maps, this remains far from clear. Our interpretation is that this refers to the 2080's high emissions 67th percentile scenario. For Perth & Kinross, this means an increase in the 1 in 200-year peak river flow of 35% (Tay catchment) and 40% (Forth catchment) should be applied to identify the future functional floodplain. This is likely to result in a significant increase in floodplain extents.

However, this might also prevent any development (and potentially any re-development) within built up areas protected by existing flood protection schemes unless some clarity is provided around the appropriate standards for those schemes. In the current circumstances, Perth and Kinross Council understand that the appropriate standard of protection is the 1 in 200-year flood plus freeboard.

While the 4th bullet point does note that development can occur within a built up area protected by an existing or committed flood protection scheme there are issues around the standard of existing or proposed flood protection schemes in relation to development (including SEPA's Planning Information Note 4) that require to be clarified. It must be made clear to developers and local authorities what the relevant standards are for flood schemes in relation to proposed development use (in line with flood risk framework/land vulnerability guidance). The policy should also rule out the commencement of any development that does occur behind committed schemes, until the flood scheme is constructed and is fully operational.

Scottish Planning Policy 2014 referred to but did not define what an appropriate standard flood protection scheme was. This omission should be addressed in NPF4. The policy should refer to a committed flood protection scheme of an appropriate standard and go on to define this so the policy intention is clear. At present, the appropriate standard of protection is a minimum of 1 in 200-year flood plus freeboard. Whilst this issue was considered at the Perth and Kinross LDP Examination in 2019, and the LDP's interpretation of Scottish Planning Policy was supported by

the Reporter, SEPA have not subsequently revised Planning Information Note 4 which is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy. There is some doubt remaining on the policy intention since the draft NPF4 does not mention a committed flood protection scheme **to the appropriate standard**, nor does it define it.

Very few (if any) new flood schemes are likely to be built to the future functional floodplain standard (if this is indeed proposed to be the 1 in 200 year plus freeboard plus climate change using the high emissions 67th percentile scenario). If this is the intention, then it would have an impact on potential redevelopments to higher vulnerability land uses and the development of existing gap sites. While Local Authorities may strive to provide FPS's with a greater standard of protection, they will find it extremely difficult to achieve the standard that NPF4 may be promoting. Perth and Kinross Council agree that climate change needs to be taken into account. The Council's current approach to new residential development is to set floor levels 600mm above the peak flood level corresponding to the 1:200 year + climate change flood event (the peak river flow being increased by 20% to allow for future climate change). The key is that this approach deals with climate change through development design rather than through the standard of protection offered by the flood scheme. Climate change can be addressed just as effectively and more achievably through development design and Perth & Kinross Council successfully argued that this approach was in line with Scottish Planning Policy at LDP Examination. The Council's approach provides equal protection, if you take SEPA's and potentially NPF4's approach (FPS needs to include for climate change whilst for the Council this can be achieved through finished floor levels). There is no difference between SEPA and Perth and Kinross Council's standards in terms of acceptable exposure to flood risk for new residential properties.

The Perth and Kinross LDP examination concluded on 11 July 2019, and the Reporter agreed with Perth and Kinross Council that climate change could be addressed through development design (including raised finished floor levels). The Reporter stated, 'the proposed plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework and the strategic development plan. It accords with the provisions of the Scottish Planning Policy and reflects the Scottish Governments planning advice on flood risk.' The Reporter in their conclusions also clearly states, "I fully acknowledge the planning information notes and guidance produced by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. However, I am required to determine whether the proposed plan takes account of the National Planning Framework, is consistent with the strategic development plan and has regard to guidance produced by Scottish Ministers." This confirms that SEPA Planning Information Note 4 is currently contrary to Scottish Planning Policy. It is necessary to clarify this matter in NPF4 by referring in policy to and defining what an appropriate flood protection scheme is. This would then hopefully trigger an update to SEPA Planning Information Note 4.

The assessment of the residual flood risk behind flood schemes will also be a costly exercise for local authorities and/or developers (requiring them to carry out an assessment of the risk of flood defences being breached or overtopped by water).

Also whilst the Council generally agrees with the proposed policy approach to restrict development in the future functional flood plain unless the site is within a built-up area it is suggested that the text in bold is added to the following bullet 'the site is within a built-up area **or is an important component of the Development Plan settlement strategy and has protection from an existing or committed flood protection scheme of the appropriate standard**'. The FPS should not be designed to protect new areas to allow for development, however where areas are incidentally protected and where they are the best sites overall in terms of Strategic Environment Assessment then there will be occasions where these are appropriate locations for development despite being outwith the existing built-up area.

A definition as to what a built-up area is should also be included to remove any doubt around this.

There is no mention of stilted/elevated construction. Does this omission reflect SEPA's recent policy statement on the acceptability of this, under certain circumstances? If so, these suitable scenarios should be set out in NPF4.

Under the listed exceptions (2nd bullet point), this should be clarified to mean that ground floors can be sacrificial/flood resilient (e.g. in garage/storage areas), and/or that all finished floor levels should be elevated up above future flood levels plus an allowance for freeboard. The latter is also in accord with Perth & Kinross Council's current guidance (which requires floor levels to be set above the 1 in 200-year flood level plus a 20% climate change uplift plus 600mm freeboard).

Under the listed exceptions (4th bullet point), access/egress requirements will be difficult as during more extreme flood events, being able to travel is almost impossible. The policy should clarify what level of access/egress is required (pedestrian only, or for vehicles and emergency vehicles?).

Under the listed exceptions (5th bullet point), flood-resistant and resilient materials and construction methods are noted. There are difficulties resourcing this assessment and gaining consideration of building standards teams during the planning application stages. If it is left solely to planning system and the monitoring of a condition (as sufficient details will not be available at the planning application stage) then it will not be effectively implemented. This will require changes to Building Standards as it is not possible to enforce this through Planning. This is a technical standard, and its place is within building regulations. It is considered that the role of the planning system on this issue should be an awareness raising and supporting one, highlighting the building standards regulations which will apply.

Under the listed exceptions (6th bullet point), the policy must clarify how this will be implemented via the Planning process and to what extent should development proposals be adaptable for future climate change?

13c

As per the existing SPP, small-scale extensions are again excluded. While this is understood, the text states "provided they would not have a significant effect on the storage capacity of the functional floodplain or local flooding problems." This may still require a flood risk assessment to be carried out to identify the impact. Realistically, any development within the (future) functional floodplain will have an impact on the local flood risk.

13d

There is no definition in the glossary of the terms "Most Vulnerable" or "Civil Infrastructure" – both should be clarified. Presumably this assumes the reader is aware of the existing SPP risk framework/SEPA Land Vulnerability guidance?

Reference is made to the "functional floodplain". This should be amended to "future functional floodplain" to be consistent with the rest of policy 13.

13e

First bullet point - the principle of this is accepted, as it could contribute to reducing overall flood risk, however it may also create the potential for unsuitable development. The policy should

clearly state that buildings should be designed to be free from surface water flooding. The standard of surface water flood risk should also be clearly defined.

The second bullet point does not support development proposals that increase discharge to the public sewer network. Flood sensitive watercourses and roads drainage systems should also be included in this.

Policy requires that development should not be supported where the design for surface water drainage and ground water drainage increases discharge to the public sewer network. However the implementation of this policy would be impractical within city centre areas. In urban areas, all potential means of dealing with surface water flooding must be pursued. Scottish Water must be encouraged to improve their sewer networks (which are only designed to cope with a 1 in 30-year storm event) and to use them to contribute to the drainage of urban areas. Very often there are no available alternative means of draining such areas.

This will prevent opportunities for brownfield sites to minimise discharge to pre-development greenfield rates or a significant reduction in flood risk.

The definition of flooding within NPF4 excludes sewer flooding. The definition should be altered to include it.

The third bullet point is not clear. The potential for a negative impact is understood, but we are concerned that unsuitable development (in terms of flood risk) could be justified on the basis of providing other blue green infrastructure (which remains undefined). It would be preferable to ensure that the drainage system at least has a neutral (or positive) impact.

13f

The policy refers to minimising the area of impermeable surface. This should be clarified as it is not enforceable. This would require a change to permitted development rights to ensure we minimise the area of impermeable surface.

This could lead to an increase in permeable paving being put forward, but many Roads Authorities have issues with this. This could also lead to maintenance issues.

At the second bullet point, the text 'adequate' should be clarified. The policy should state a minimum standard (such as the 1 in 200-year flood plus an increase to allow for future climate change).

The term 'wherever practicable' should be deleted as SUDS are a requirement for any development greater than a single dwelling.

The policy neglects to mention Section 7 maintenance agreements in relation to SUDS.

13g

The policy for public water supply could benefit from clarification. It seems that the intention is that private water supplies should generally not be supported even where a sustainable and consistently safe supply (taking account of climate change) can be demonstrated. It is unclear why exceptional circumstances are required to justify a private supply if it is a sustainable and consistently safe supply, and what these exceptional circumstances would be. The following is suggested as alternative policy wording 'All new developments must be served by a satisfactory mains or private water supply complying with the Water (Scotland) Act 1980 and associated

Private Water Supply Regulation. Development proposals within or near an area served by Public Mains water must connect to this supply. Where connection to the Public Mains water supply is not feasible it will be the responsibility of the developer to demonstrate that the private water supply to a new development is consistently safe to use for drinking and hygiene purposes, will not prejudice any existing users of the water supply, will be resilient to periods of water scarcity and in line with the above act and regulations.'

The policy must be strengthened through the use of more appropriate language by replacing the frequent use of 'should' (e.g. "Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources.") with 'shall'.

13h

Under some circumstances, natural flood management can increase flood risk (due to the reconciliation of peak flows in tributaries or introducing woody debris into watercourses which creates a risk of blockages) so any proposed measures have to be assessed on their merits. Any development proposals should be informed by a flood risk assessment as a minimum and should also be linked to the relevant flood risk management plan. We would therefore propose the text here be amended to "... should be supported, where appropriate".

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Liveable Places – Policy 14 & 15 Health, Wellbeing & Safety

Summary – page 85

A new policy on lifelong health and wellbeing aims to create healthier places and requires a Health Impact Assessment of any proposals considered likely to generate significant health effects. Development that will significantly adversely affect air quality or generate unacceptable noise is not supported. Local food growing is encouraged.

Q36. Do you agree that this policy will ensure places support health, wellbeing and safety and strengthen the resilience of communities?

The policy is generally supported, specifically the aim to support health and wellbeing through planning policy. Better interaction with the public health body would support this approach. However, improved structures of communication are required to assist with the aim of this policy. The NHS is at tipping point in terms of its own infrastructure and the hope that planning can resolve this issue seems a bit naïve. Gaining clearer regularly updated data as to surgery capacities would help but we cannot determine whether surgeries will be able to recruit health professionals and often this is an issue in rural areas. So, creating linkages may help us to understand existing situations but it is very difficult to forecast what is likely to happen in terms of public health care.

There should be further linkages to equality and the influence design has on a sense of safety. This sense of safety has a direct impact on mental welfare and the policy is not clear enough on the correlations. Often, poorly design spaces, with busy roads and inaccessible services exacerbates mental health issues. This approach to the safety policy is not really covering the full remit of safety and just a way of joining the two issues together without much consideration for the linkages. If you want children & young people to grow up to be healthy, I think there is more to it than simply saying that they need to have access to a doctor and not be placed near a military zone.

Detailed comments

Policy 14(a) requires partnership working. The role of planning is often overlooked by other sections of local authorities. A culture change is required for better working relationships between the relevant sections of the council.

Policy 14(b) requires further definition of what a significant adverse health effect is.

Policy 14(e) refers to food growing spaces which can be related to improving health. However, linkages should be made to other relatable and inter-linked policies on open space, blue & green infrastructure, recreational facilities etc. Is this the best positioning for this aim?

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 16 – Land & Premises for Business & Employment

Summary – pages 86 – 87

Updated policy on business and employment requires development plans to identify employment land, and supports business development as well as alternative ways of working and micro-businesses

Q37. Do you agree that this policy ensures places support new and expanded businesses and investment, stimulate entrepreneurship and promote alternative ways of working in order to achieve a green recovery and build a wellbeing economy?

Response – Perth and Kinross Council seeks amendment of Policy 16, as NPF4 should also provide policy support to protect existing employment use sites and buildings, and there should also be direction given to ensuring Local authorities have an effective employment land strategy. At the moment the policy does not sufficiently support businesses and investment as it does not ensure there are serviced ready opportunities identified in the Local Development Plan, or a strategy to provide them cross funded by housing development.

NPF4 should require Local Authorities to set out a delivery plan for their economic land strategy which covers:

- identification of economic development sites where there is programmed public sector intervention
- identifying an appropriate cross funding planning policy for the provision of serviced employment land and/or buildings alongside housing development to ensure we help deliver balanced mixed-use communities

To achieve the Scottish Government’s strategy and vision we need a consistent approach set out by Scottish Government for analysing and evidencing the effectiveness of the Local Development Plan (LDP) employment land and economic strategy.

Due to market conditions and the often marginal nature of developing opportunities for employment uses developers are sometimes asked to cross fund the provision of serviced employment land or buildings alongside housing development to ensure we help deliver balanced mixed use communities. NPF4 should have a policy which helps support this approach and which requires LAs to have a strategy which delivers serviced employment land and supports economic development opportunities. Identifying sufficient land for employment uses in our Local Development Plans, even if they are in the right location they will not necessarily deliver the opportunities needed, we need to focus on serviced plots which are development ready. This would also help deliver the 20-minute neighbourhood (ensuring that there are employment opportunities within larger new residential areas).

In terms of retaining existing employment uses (class 4, 5 and 6) these are typically under pressure for conversion to more profitable uses either once a business leaves or by an existing business to try to secure uplift in value. If we are to succeed with 20-minute neighbourhood policy, the retention of employment uses within existing residential areas (where possible) is part of the solution. There will be situations where after marketing the existing use is not viable but there will be others where its loss is avoidable and detrimental. NPF4 should provide policy

support to protect viable employment uses and identify when it is appropriate to consider alternative uses.

It is noted that whilst there should be policy support for homeworking, live-work units and micro-businesses this needs to be achieved in a way that does not undermine the Town Centre First approach. This needs to be clarified, and policy the linkage made.

Detailed comments

To inform this approach NPF4 should review the role of business land audits and consider the extent to which they link with local economic strategies. This was mentioned in the Position Statement but has not been clarified in the draft National Planning Framework 4 nor has the role for demand assessments.

Scottish Government should:

- require a local economic strategy is undertaken regularly to inform reviews of the Local Development Plan
- clarify the basic methodology of business land audits, demand assessment, and local economic strategies to ensure a consistent and robust evidence base. The economic land strategy needs consistent methodology to forecasts needs, demands, as well as opportunities and threats (such as overreliance on a market sector or company).
- identify criteria to assess whether the LDPs employment land supply is effective and its economic strategy deliverable

As part of this review of business land audits and demand assessments there is a need for Scottish Government to provide a consistent methodology for how Local Authorities determine employment land needs, demands and threats/opportunities. There is significant guidance on assessing and defining housing land requirements, but this does not exist for employment land. Addressing this imbalance would help provide a robust local and national evidence base which would support the strategy to build a wellbeing economy that benefits everyone, and every place, in Scotland.

Historically there have been more significant needs/demands for serviced employment land or buildings than there has been public sector capacity for intervention to address market failure. Without sufficient supply of relatively deliverable opportunities (serviced sites or buildings) or retaining sufficient existing buildings/spaces for these uses we do not necessarily know or understand what the demand could be and what opportunities we are missing out on.

Also there is a need to consider fiscal and grant regimes for reinvestment in our existing supply as the current focus is on areas of greatest disadvantage and need, and this needs refresh within the context of changing digital, workplace and manufacturing/ industrial/commercial practices.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 17 – Sustainable Tourism

Summary – page 88

A new policy on sustainable tourism supports growth of the sector in a way which manages impacts on local communities. A new policy to manage short term holiday letting is introduced, and existing facilities which have a viable use are protected.

Q38. Do you agree that this policy will help to inspire people to visit Scotland and support sustainable tourism which benefits local people and is consistent with our net zero and nature commitment?

Welcome the overall principle to support tourism facilities/accommodation but this policy seems to be focused primarily on mitigating the impacts of tourism and not generating sustainable tourism that is aligned with the net zero agenda.

Detailed comments

Overall, more is needed on what proposals need to include to make them sustainable e.g. should holiday accommodation be held to same standards as mainstream housing? How should tourism businesses be required to link to sustainable transport, waste management, carbon reduction, improved environmental resilience, energy efficiency etc?

b) Welcome the overall principle to support tourism facilities/accommodation but an additional policy criterion should be added noting that all proposals under Policy 17b will be required to ensure compliance with all other relevant planning policies as part of the consideration of the overall principle of the development.

c) Question the extent to which burdening new development with the alleviation of an existing problem complies with the Circular.

d) Note that a definition is included in the glossary for huts but it is unclear whether this only relates to huts for personal use or if it includes huts as a form of holiday accommodation which may raise different issues.

e) Support the inclusion of short-term lets but it is not clear how this interacts with Short Term Control Areas and whether this policy criterion can be applied to areas not identified as a control area. More clarity is required in relation to the justification of what is an 'unacceptable impact', and the inclusion of criteria on how a planning authority is to measure whether a loss of residential accommodation can be outweighed by local economic benefits would be helpful e.g. whether there is a surplus of houses of a particular size / type, whether the house has been vacant for a period of time etc. or alternatively a direction to authorities to set out such criteria in their LDP.

f) Specific terminology on what constitutes 'tourism-related facility' will be important in implementing this policy.

g) Should refer to sustainable tourism or climate change.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 18 – Culture and creativity

Summary – page 89

A new policy on culture and creativity recognises the importance of the sector and requires proposals to make provision for public art, encourages creative and cultural uses, protects existing venues, and reflects the agent of change principle.

Q39. Do you agree that this policy supports our places to reflect and facilitate enjoyment of and investment in our collective culture and creativity?

Overall, this is a supportive policy and the principle of having a criteria-based approach upon which to assess development proposals for alternatives away from arts and cultural uses is welcomed.

More could be made of the positive contribution these facilities make to communities in which they are located.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 19 – Green Energy

Summary – page

Updated policies on green energy support renewable energy development other than in national parks and national scenic areas, subject to an assessment of their impacts on a case by case basis. Repowering of wind farms, small scale generation, negative emissions technologies and solar energy should be supported. Criteria for assessing proposals are set out.

Q40. Do you agree that this policy will ensure our places support continued expansion of low-carbon and net zero energy technologies as a key contributor to net zero emission by 2045?

Response – The requirement to support the deployment of green energy as part of the net zero is recognised, with land use planning playing a significant role. Policy 19 has incorporated an updated approach to green energy developments from the previous SPP policy, taking a more facilitative approach including removing the requirement for planning authorities to prepare a spatial framework for wind. In light of the updated approach, it is considered that Policy 19 requires to be worded so that all relevant considerations are appropriately assessed and given due weight in the decision-making process. Whilst it is recognised that planning authorities have a role to play in maximising opportunities for the deployment of sustainable green energy, careful planning is required to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck which includes ensuring environmental and other considerations are appropriately considered. Various clarifications, amendments and additions are included in the detailed comments section to support a strengthened policy for green energy which will assist planning authorities and other decision makers in enabling these types of developments in the right place and at the right scale.

Detailed comments

Policy 19

General support for the overall policy to facilitate the continued deployment of, and transition to, green energy. Decarbonising and decentralising the energy grid will continue to play a key role in facilitating the transition to a net zero future. With the Scottish Government expectation that onshore wind is likely to play a significant role in the expansion of the energy grid – both through repowering and new facilities – careful planning will be required to maximise opportunities for deployment (particularly repowering) in the right locations and at the right scale, whilst at the same time ensuring appropriate environmental protections are in place.

Policy 19 – Spatial Framework for Wind

There is disappointment that the previous requirement for spatial frameworks for wind with associated criteria hierarchy has not been carried through into NPF4. The current Spatial Framework for Wind provides a nationally-consistent framework that provides a strategic steer in terms of the relevant environmental/social considerations that will be required to be taken in account. The considerations listed under Policy 19K go some way towards addressing this, but decision making would be more robust if these criteria were accompanied by the strategic targeting of suitable sites via a comprehensive strategic spatial framework which would allow for the application of a consistent approach. Policy as currently reads likely to result in carte blanche approach by developers and an increase in appeals. It is considered that capacity studies will be critical in this regard.

It is not clear how existing locally developed policy and guidance (e.g. Supplementary Guidance) which is cognisant of current policy (SPP) will sit in relation to the emerging draft NPF4 policy and what status this has.

Policy 19(a)

How will a local authority monitor/evidence what the 'full potential' will be for electricity and heat being delivered through renewable sources? The industry will define how and where developers will wish to deliver sites based on market conditions however this does not necessarily reflect environmental sensitivities on the ground which will be a key component for decision-making for local authorities and communities particularly where the scale of anticipated additional onshore wind uptake (as per draft Onshore Wind Policy Statement) is significant.

Policy 19(b)

Whilst the 'in principle' status is supported there should be specific reference to the detailed considerations included under Policy 19k.

Policy 19(c)

This is supported and should be extended to discourage wind farms that are not located within, but will adversely impact on the qualifying features of, National Parks/National Scenic Areas, principally in terms of visual/landscape impact.

Policy 19(d)

The wording '*unacceptable*' is also a term that will require clarification/further guidance in terms of the test in which planning decisions will be based, otherwise there will be discrepancy across planning authorities as to how this is applied which will detract from a consistent basis from which decisions are made.

Further detail is required to understand what is meant by 'recognising the sensitivity of any other national or international designations'. Consideration of other designated areas of wild land and carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat should be added as national and international designations.

Policy 19(f)

Similar to comments on Policy 19b, this sub-policy should be expanded to include reference to being subject to detailed consideration against Policy 19k.

Policy 19(g)

Further clarification would be welcomed in relation to the term 'areas identified for wind farms'. Does this apply only to consented sites, and/or sites identified in spatial policy/landscape capacity studies?

Policy 19(h)

This is supported. Any proposals for carbon offsetting should follow natural solutions in the first instance and within the confines of the site where possible, unless justified. Any decarbonisation strategy should detail the specific offsetting measures to be applied including consideration of construction, operational and decommissioning/restoration phases, and monitoring strategies. As with other draft NPF4 policies, this developing policy area will require adequate resourcing and upskilling of planning authorities with specific reference to the requirements surrounding decarbonisation strategies.

Policy 19(j)

Specific reference should be added to this sub-policy on landscape/visual impacts.

Policy 19(k)

The introductory statement should explicitly state: 'development proposals for renewable energy developments must take into account *and ensure no unacceptable impacts in relation to*'. This aligns with the current wording of Policy 19d where unacceptable impacts are referenced.

Policy 19(k) (greenhouse gas emissions)

This should specifically reference *net* greenhouse gas emissions including consideration of any anticipated GHG emissions as well as effect on emissions reduction targets.

Policy 19k (Cumulative impacts)

A standard threshold for cumulative visual impact assessment needs to be clear to avoid adverse impacts on landscape and scenic quality. Cumulative impacts should involve a standardised approach to cumulative visual impact assessments, which includes clarification on the role of existing landscape capacity studies.

Clarity on the assessment of cumulative effects is required – is this defined by impact in combination with other existing windfarm developments in term of consideration of valid applications which have not been determined.

Policy 19(k) (impacts on communities and individual dwellings)

Clarity sought on the 2km community separation area around cities, towns and villages based on landform and other features which restrict views out from the settlement.

Policy 19k (landscape and visual impacts)

This should specifically reference National Scenic Areas, wild land areas and locally designated landscape areas.

Policy 19k (natural heritage)

This should specifically reference protected species and nationally/locally designated sites.

Policy should be aligned with policies for proposed nature networks and strategic blue and green infrastructure to avoid fragmentation of landscape scale ecosystem services.

Policy 19k (carbon rich soils)

This should specifically reference peatland and prime agricultural land as well as carbon rich soils as a general *soils* criterion.

Reference to carbon rich soils should be expanded to include priority peatland habitats, deep peat soils (Class 1, 2 and 5).

Policy 19k (historic environment & cultural heritage)

This should be expanded to include sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Inventory of Historic Battlefields.

Policy 19k (tourism & recreation)

Clarity is required to define impacts on accessible recreation and tourism assets.

Policy 19k (water environment)

This should specifically reference impact from, as well as impact on exacerbating, flood risk. Additional reference should be made to national flood management, impact on groundwater quality, water abstraction for agriculture and wetlands.

Policy 19k (conditions in relation to decommissioning/restoration)

With the aim of wind farms being suitable for use in perpetuity, it would be helpful for consideration of how the windfarm could be renewed at end of current life in planning conditions, to avoid future disturbance to carbon rich soils, wasted embodied carbon of assets, etc.

Policy 19k (Woodland & Forestry)

An additional criterion should be added seeking consideration of impact on existing woodland and forestry in terms of biodiversity (linked to natural heritage criterion), recreational interests, and carbon sequestration/net carbon implications.

Policy 19 – other comments

Section 3F of Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009: It appears that the previous requirement for low and zero carbon generating technologies as per Section 3F of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is not included as part of the draft NPF4 either through Policy 11 or Policy 19. Clarification on this point is required.

Energy Storage: Further policy coverage on energy storage would be welcomed to support proposals where energy storage is part of a combined energy scheme alongside generation and associated infrastructure. There is the potential for linked energy generation/storage proposals resulting in a net lesser environmental impact if these are developed in tandem and without the need for separate sites to be identified thereby requiring less landtake for associated infrastructure.

Technology in buildings: it is considered there should be further coverage of building level green energy technologies. In particular the approach to historic environment assets and the role of

green technologies should potentially be reviewed. For example, solar PV is one type of technology that could support a historic building meeting future EPC targets however there are restrictions around what is considered to be acceptable in this regard. A holistic approach balancing the various interests may be needed and reflected in planning policy.

Further clarification is required to define 'low carbon fuels' as this has multiple definitions.

Further clarification is required over size thresholds for 'small scale' etc.

NPF4 Data Atlas: Clarity on the layer for wind spatial framework in the NPF4 data atlas is required. The Wind Turbine Framework (2020) appears to be existing group 1 and 2 areas as defined in Table 1: spatial framework for onshore wind for specific local authorities only. PKC LDP2 contains a similar spatial framework and a DRAFT version of Renewable and Low Guidance that contains an additional spatial representation of locally defined strategic level sensitivities that are not represented in this evidence and/or not reflected in the proposed policy within NPF4.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 20 – Zero waste

Summary – pages 92-93

An updated and expanded policy on zero waste requires plans to identify locations for new infrastructure and supports development in line with the waste hierarchy. Landfill and energy from waste proposals will only be supported where there is a demonstrable need and waste heat and / or electricity generation is included.

Q41. Do you agree that this policy will help our places to be more resource efficient and to be supported by services and facilities that help to achieve a circular economy?

This policy could go further, the zero waste policy should require developers to consider the full lifecycle of the building at the development stage, so buildings are flexible, adaptable and if they need to be decommissioned/demolished that can easily be done.

Including the proposed lifespan of the development and encouraging longer life buildings will lead longer term to a significant reduction in waste

Detailed comments

Policy 20(a) it will be difficult to identify sites without details of what is proposed and any potential emissions.

Policy 20(c) should apply to all development categories including local developments. It's unclear why the category of local developments has been excluded

Policy 20(i) it will also be hard to identify sites in absence of specific proposals because the environmental assessment will be too difficult and the costs of doing so may not be proportionate. Query that there appears to be some duplication of the SEPA role.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 21 – Aquaculture

Summary – page 94

An updated policy on sustainable aquaculture supports industry needs whilst taking into account wider marine planning. Requirements to assess impacts are set out including operational effects, siting and design of cages and land based facilities

Q42. Do you agree that this policy will support investment in aquaculture and minimise its potential impacts on the environment?

Response – Perth and Kinross Council has no comment to make on this question.

Detailed Comments

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 22 – Minerals

Summary – page 95

An updated policy on minerals requires plans to identify a 10 year land bank at all times, safeguards resources and sets out criteria for assessing proposals for extraction. Extraction of fossil fuels is not supported other than in exceptional circumstances that are consistent with national policy, and the policy confirms the Scottish Government’s position of no support for the development of unconventional oil and gas in Scotland.

Q43. Do you agree that this policy will support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of extraction on minerals on communities and the environment?

This policy builds on the provisions of the adopted local development plan policy. There are no sites for fossil fuel extraction nor for development of unconventional oil and gas in Perth and Kinross.

Turning to mineral extraction, firstly the policy should not omit consideration of areas of valuable geodiversity; and secondly the reference to a standard approach for financial guarantees for restoration and aftercare will maintain the existing supplementary guidance provisions.

Detailed comments

Restoration of mineral extraction should explicitly address the requirement to assess and retain areas of valuable geodiversity. While such assets should not limit extractive activity, such activity provides opportunities for essential historic, education and scientific resources to be revealed and retained for future generations.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Productive Places – Policy 23 – Digital infrastructure

Summary – page 96

An updated policy on digital infrastructure requires proposals to incorporate appropriate, universal and future-proofed digital infrastructure. New services and technology in areas with no or low connectivity are supported.

Q44. Do you agree that this policy ensures all of our places will be digitally connected?

Overall, yes this national policy is supported as it provides a positive policy framework against which proposals for the delivery of digital infrastructure may be assessed.

There is no need to repeat this policy support in Local Development Plans if it is becomes adopted at the National level.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 24 – 27 – Distinctive Places

Summary – page 97

An updated policy on city, town, commercial and local centres aims to support lower carbon urban living. Out-of-town development including new retail is not supported and the policy supports development which diversifies and strengthens city, town and local centres whilst seeking to avoid the clustering of certain developments that can have negative impacts on communities. A town centre first assessment is required for all uses that generate significant footfall. Town centre living is supported provided residential amenity can be achieved and commercial uses are demonstrated to be no longer viable.

Q45. Do you agree that these policies will ensure Scotland's places will support low carbon urban living

Response – It is agreed that the policies identify some of the criteria that influences where conversion to residential can be appropriate, and that it recognises the importance of neighbourhood centres to the 20 minute neighbourhoods, and it is good that it mentions click and collect locker points. However in this time of significant change it is considered that these policies do not provide enough context, direction, or guidance on when/how to retain town centre uses when the market is in a state of flux, and how to successfully manage any retreat to a smaller core town centre.

Detailed comments

It is unclear why the principles in the policy 26 town centre first assessment are not meant to apply to retail development. It appears that policy 25 is against all out of town locations for retail of a scale that generates significant footfall (regardless of the retail catchment's capacity needs, and if there is a lack of suitable town centre, edge of town centre, or commercial centre opportunities). This does not appear pragmatic, and it is not clear why other significant footfall uses are subject to different considerations than retail. There is a need for further policy explanation on how this approach for retail is meant to be applied. Also clarification is needed as to what scale of retail this approach applies to, by defining retail of a scale that generates significant footfall. Also definitions for edge of centre and out of centre locations are needed.

NPF4 should also add policy guidance and principles on issues such as:

- the potential negative impact that introducing residential units to the heart of certain commercial and retail areas (which extends beyond being within the same structure) can have on businesses and cultural venues and events (who may then be required to curtail the way they operate)
- transitioning towards identifying smaller (sustainable) centres
- where residential can be appropriate - encouraging local policies which perhaps acknowledge when active uses within ground floor properties might no longer be possible such when as the vacancy rate exceeds 10% for a certain period of time, and when the existing business is not viable and it has been marketed for a reasonable period for a reasonable price (Angus LDP example)
- clarifying how to provide support for night-time economy
- clarifying sustainable transport options
- clarifying what constitutes suitable residential amenity within residential conversions

- considering the appropriateness of new housing development forms with principles on how/where balcony provision and how/where private/semi-private/communal outdoor spaces could and should be carefully designed into higher density town centre living

Clarification on these policy guidance and principles is needed to provide a consistency of understanding and approach to the issues albeit with enough flexibility for local authorities to be responsive to their local situation. NPF4 needs to be pragmatic about the future whilst guarding against a short-term approach since sectors should hopefully rebound somewhat in the medium to long term. However, the least significant scenario is still likely to include some long-term structural changes to our centres arising from habit forming consumer behaviour changes. National policy principles alongside clarifying what Scottish Government support there is for existing city/town centre uses is important with consideration as to how the picture might evolve over the short to long term.

There is a need to ensure that the transition is as painless as possible by identifying what Scottish Government support there is to address and support town centre uses and where necessary replacement uses. A NPF4 evidence report which provides evidence on national trends and projections would help provide focus for Local Authorities and reduce duplication of effort. It is critical that consumer expenditure patterns and behaviour are included as a means of analysing market change and distribution to inform future public and private investment.

If as proposed residential development is going to be a significant part of the solution there are significant challenges to encouraging private housing investment for new build or conversion within town centres as this is a very subdued market. It is hard to imagine it becoming particularly active without substantial public sector assistance or change in fiscal regimes. It isn't the same high value market particularly in smaller towns or rural areas and it doesn't carry the same cache as city centre living. There are also typically a lot of listed buildings, and older buildings with poor energy efficiency, with high conversion/maintenance costs and there is also much underutilised space particularly on upper floors. For gap sites, contamination and archaeological constraints are common, and land assembly can be an issue due to complex historic titles and rights. Development costs can be quite high whilst the premium values of a city centre are not there. Scottish Government funding programmes linked to planning policy and guidance to ensure good quality conversions/development in the right locations/circumstances would greatly assist.

Scottish Government funding programmes are mainly focused on affordable housing. Whilst this will help bring affordable housing forward for a balanced community within our town centres there is a need to assist the middle part of the market. There is also a need for planning guidance to ensure we deliver high quality conversions with appropriate amenity in the right locations. There is a need to deliver higher levels of public and private amenity to make them attractive places to live and spend time in. Town centre living can be the best of both offering amenities and services and access to rural recreation close by. However, with people valuing gardens and open spaces we need to address this aspect where possible. If we focus on ensuring we deliver robust high amenity town centre living accommodation this should help encourage more sustainable, lower carbon lifestyles and also support existing town centre uses. This should also make town centres more viable and desirable so that longer term it requires less public sector assistance and is more robust.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 28 Historic Assets & Places

Summary – page 100 – 101

An updated policy on historic assets and places aims to safeguard valued historic assets and places including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, historic gardens and designed landscapes, battlefields, and World Heritage Sites. Demolition of buildings with historic value is not supported. Proposals to sensitively repair, enhance or bring back into use buildings at risk are supported.

Q46. Do you agree that this policy will protect and enhance our historic environment and support the reuse of redundant or neglected historic buildings?

In general, the highest proportion of historic environment assets, that we live in, work next to or walk past – undesignated archaeology/heritage – are not fully represented in this section. Without legal protection, these are the most vulnerable assets and by not clarifying this in the document and ensuring it is clear to all parties, may lead to potential loss and damage of this finite resource. Additionally, this policy is weighted towards the Historic Built Environment and Designated assets and does not make satisfactory reference to archaeology or undesignated assets. This is reinforced by the fact that Q46 at the end of the section includes explicit reference to only to historic buildings.

Further emphasis on the importance of historic assets could be made in terms of health and wellbeing. Why do we want to preserve these features? It's because people want to live in them/around them. House and land value is generally higher in areas viewed as historically significant. Businesses flourish in these places as there is a healthy influx of visitors, interested in the historic setting. We need to celebrate and demonstrate the value of preserving and enhancing our historic assets – see them as a positive asset rather than a restrictive one. We need to demonstrate the economic value of this historic placemaking whilst allowing for growth and improvements.

Detailed comments

Policy 28(b) there is no mention of the current Scottish Government PAN2/2011. This detailed document is the backbone to historic and archaeological policy and should be referenced here. The HES Managing Change guidance does not seem to fit in this section, given it is not a policy document and other guidance particularly from bodies such as ALGAO and LAA's that steer the historic environment planning system and decision-making process is also excluded.

Policy 28(m) as mentioned in our overarching comments this section should include the primary resource of all historic environment assets, the LAA's Historic Environment Record (HER).

Policy 28(n) discusses enabling development for assets or places otherwise unacceptable. It is worth noting that in some cases unknown undesignated archaeological remains may be discovered in the early stages of development that are deemed of national significance. Provision should be made for including archaeology in this discussion as it reads as very building specific.

Policy 28(o) is a very narrow view of what development archaeology consists of and as such should be widened to incorporate the other aspects of development control archaeology – i.e. Standing Building Survey, Heritage Impact Assessments, outreach and public interpretation etc. Also, development may occur in an area without any historic assets but given various factors -

setting, historic context etc., will be considered as having potential for unknown archaeological remains to exist. As touched on above in 3-Section N, these assets will be new and dealt with through the planning system, and as such appropriate provision and protection must be made to ensure they are adequately resourced and enforceable throughout the project.

Policy 28(p) is too simplistic and fails to adequately cover the archaeological planning process. It appears to be concerned with unexpected/unknown archaeological discoveries although it doesn't explicitly state this. Clarification on this section is required. Additionally, it needs to have stronger wording: '...**should** be reported to the planning authority' would need to be replaced with '...**must** be reported to the planning authority'.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 29 – Urban Edges & the Green belt

Summary – page 102-103

An updated policy on urban edges and the green belt aims to protect countryside around cities and towns and limits the circumstances where green belt development can be acceptable to specific uses.

Q47. Do you agree that this policy will increase the density of our settlements, restore nature and promote local living by limiting urban expansion and using the land around our towns and cities wisely?

This policy appears to be more prescriptive than some others and the extent to which authorities will have the scope to vary requirements and identify area-specific criteria is questioned.

Question whether this section should instead sit within 'Rural Places' as part of a tiered approach with green belts as the most heavily restricted area (see also comments under 'Rural Places').

Detailed comments

b) Question whether the intention is that this policy will effectively replace existing LDP policy or whether Authorities will have the scope to alter the criteria under b), e.g. under the first bullet LDPs should not support unless it is 'development associated with...' but the current PKC policy is stronger in that it only allows development where 'it can be demonstrated that the development is essential for....'

Also under the first bullet, development not supported unless for 'retired workers where there is no suitable alternative accommodation available' – question what provision can be made to stop houses subsequently being sold off on the open market e.g. when retiree dies or moves elsewhere which then leads to pressure for a further house for the succession to the next generation. This could be done by restricting the occupancy, but the Scottish Government have previously directed against the use of such restrictions. There is also a need for location criteria e.g. where it is demonstrated that the best possible site has been chosen.

Bullet nine – note that a definition of 'historic environment assets' and 'cultural significance' are included in the glossary, but these are not particularly user-friendly. PKC green belt policy refers to the housing in the countryside policy category 5 which allows the conversion or replacement of traditional non-domestic buildings. Traditional is defined as 'buildings usually constructed before 1919 of materials which would have been available in the local area at that time, largely stone (with or without harling) and slate'. It is suggested that this is a clearer and less subjective approach.

Bullet ten – question why this is restricted to houses currently in occupation. There are many reasons why a building may have become vacant, and this needs more guidance on time periods and reasons.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 30 – Vacant & Derelict Land

Summary – page 104

An updated and expanded policy on vacant and derelict land and empty buildings encourages re-use of land and buildings and discourages greenfield development unless there are no suitable brownfield alternatives.

Q48. Do you agree that this policy will help to proactively enable the reuse of vacant and derelict land and buildings?

Response –

Overall policy approach is welcomed in supporting re-use of existing vacant and derelict land and redundant buildings, reducing the scope of greenfield development, and ensuring contaminated land will be suitably remediated through development proposals. Referenced to the use of vacant and derelict land to support biodiversity is supported. Support could be provided for the use of unused land for Gypsy / Traveller stopover sites where safe, suitable and appropriate.

There is a need for the policy to be careful about definitions and clarify when/where this will apply – for example, PKC currently has a different definition of rural brownfield land for the purposes of Housing in the Countryside.

Policy 30(e) – this should also specifically state ‘taking in to account their suitability for conversion to other uses *and compatibility with the surrounding area.*’

Detailed comments

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 31 – Rural Places

Summary – page 105-106

An updated policy on rural places aims to support the sustainability and growth of rural communities and economies. Resettlement of previously inhabited areas is supported where it is consistent with climate change mitigation targets. Proposals for development outwith rural settlements in more remote rural areas are supported in certain circumstances. Proposals in more accessible rural areas are not supported where they would contribute to rural suburbanisation or car-based commuting.

Q49. Do you agree that this policy will ensure that rural places can be vibrant and sustainable?

This policy represents a move away from current PKC LDP2 policy, particularly in relation to the increased flexibility for new housing in rural areas. Concern that some of the wording is vague and could lead to pressure for inappropriate development although it is acknowledged that authorities will be able to set a more restrictive approach, if appropriate, in accessible or pressured rural areas. A more proactive approach in the more remote areas is welcomed although consideration will need to be given as to how to ensure new houses built aren't lost to holiday or second homes but genuinely contribute to increasing the supply of housing for local people.

The 'urban edges and the green belt' section is currently separate but question whether it should instead sit within Rural Places as part of a tiered approach with green belts as the most heavily restricted area, followed by accessible / pressured areas, and then a more relaxed approach in remote areas.

Detailed comments

a) Clarify how planning authorities are to identify accessible, intermediate and remote areas. Further guidance on this should be prepared to provide a consistent approach across all local authorities.

LDPs to be informed by an understanding of population change over time. Concern that it may be difficult to get population information at a small enough level to be able to do this especially for the most remote areas.

b) Should include 'where sustainable'. The term 'previously inhabited' needs to be defined to enable a consistent approach across all local authorities. For example, are there temporal / built environment considerations here to take into account.

c) First bullet is too vague.

Bullet five – The reuse of vacant, derelict or brownfield land 'where a return to a natural state is not likely' needs to be worded more strongly e.g. where it can be demonstrated that it will not return to a natural state without intervention.

Bullet 6 – 'Small site' needs quantified. Suggest adding '...and where it is demonstrated that there are no suitable sites available within the settlement'. Question whether there should be some scope for allowing market houses for local people where this is required to make an affordable proposal economically viable or where necessary to incentivise a landowner to release the land.

Bullet 7 – The policy criterion: ‘contribute towards sustainable settlements and 20 minute neighbourhoods’ is an open-ended policy and requires further guidance to clarify the various considerations where a development is expected to meet these tests.

e) Second bullet – More is needed on succession homes e.g. number which will be allowed and whether this will only apply to farms or include other rural businesses. Also question what provision can be made to stop houses for retirement succession subsequently being sold off on the open market e.g. when retiree dies or moves elsewhere which then leads to pressure for a further house for the succession to the next generation. This could be done by restricting the occupancy, but the Scottish Government have previously directed against the use of such restrictions. There is also a need for location criteria e.g. where it is demonstrated that the best possible site has been chosen.

Bullet 4 – Although this policy specifies consideration of Historic Assets, PKHT feel that it’s focus and consideration is primarily historic buildings and the archaeological assets have not been fully considered.

Bullet 6 – As above under c) ‘where a return to a natural state is not likely’ needs to be worded more strongly. Need for more parameters to be set as to where it’s appropriate to develop brownfield land. Concern that the glossary definition of brownfield as land which ‘has previously been developed’ and ‘may cover...land occupied by redundant or unused buildings’ is too loose for inclusion here. Need for a higher standard of design on such sites and only where it’s creating improvement or resolving an amenity or health issue, not just to create an uplift in value for the owner.

h) Bullet 4 should be expanded to read: ‘for the generation, *transmission and storage* from a renewable source’.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 32 – Natural Places

Summary – page 107 Plans are required to identify and protect natural assets including landscape species and habitats. The policy protects designated areas, protected species, wild land and deals with non-native species. The precautionary principle is required to be applied to national and international designations.

Q50. Do you agree that this policy will protect and restore natural places?

No. There is no power in this policy to restore nature through development, although opportunities can be set out in spatial strategies. The policy needs to be combined with or linked to policy 3 particularly with regard to nature networks (which are referenced here) or clearly limited to designated areas and species. It would be useful to define what is meant by natural places/ natural assets/natural environment in the introduction (as set out in Policy 32(a)) and have consistent terminology throughout. A requirement to explore or realise opportunities to enhance all these assets would be a better reflection of the intention of policy 3.

Detailed Comments

Policy 32(a)

The requirement on LDPs to identify assets in plans, including local designations is supported. However “assets” should be defined. It should be clearly set out if plans are expected to identify nature networks in plans, and the nature networks from policy 3 be clearly referenced (or combined) here.

Policy 32 (b)

A general environmental protection policy is already provided in policy 3 with some detail. This policy risks conflicting with that policy. The use of the word unacceptable does not add anything when there are specific tests laid out for protected areas, and requirements in policy 3. The exception is for general landscape which would benefit from a separate express policy. If the policy is intended to apply only to the tests in the following paragraphs this should be made explicit.

Policy 32(c)

The policy setting out the requirement for an appropriate assessment is supported. This could be enhanced by including a reference to “regardless of proposed mitigation” to take into account the People Over Wind judgment.

Policy 32(d)

Outweighing criteria should be “at least” of national importance.

Policy 32(e)

The reference to impacts being fully considered prior to the determination is supported. As currently worded if there is no pre-existing evidence of protected species then no further action is required. Reference to steps to establish the presence of protected species through a site assessment or surveys is required.

Policy 32(f)

Developers should abide by legislation on non-native species and not just take this into account. They should demonstrate that plans are in place to address any INNS on site.

Policy 32(g)

A lower standard of protection for local designations is accepted. However this could better support the local value of such a site, by rephrasing as “should only be supported”. This should also recognise the value of local nature conservation sites as part of the nature network. For other factors to outweigh the value of an identified local site one would hope that the weighting is of greater than local importance. The phrase “of local importance” could be removed or rephrased as “at least local importance”.

Scottish Planning Policy previously set out tests for identifying local nature conservation sites, both for geodiversity and biodiversity. There is no test for such sites other than in now outdated 2006 guidance from (as was) SNH. The criteria for identifying sites should be included either in NPF4 or in updated guidance from NatureScot to ensure consistency and efficiency.

Policy 32(h) The precautionary principle should apply to all designated landscape or natural heritage assets including local nature conservation sites and protected species. The principle as set out in Scottish Government consultation on environmental principles and governance applies the principle to where there is “serious or irreversible damage”. Such damage can occur regardless of the nature of the site. Much of this is already incorporated into legislative tests and may be better simply recognising the principle in the introduction (it also applies to policy 3).

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 33 – Peat & Carbon Rich Soils

Summary – page

An updated policy on peat and carbon rich soils protects peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat from development other than for critical infrastructure, renewable energy with a net carbon benefit, small scale rural development or peatland restoration. Proposals for new commercial peat extraction are not supported other than in exceptional circumstances.

Q51. Do you agree that this policy protects carbon rich soils and supports the preservation and restoration of peatlands?

Response –

Overall the updated policy is supported providing a sound framework from which to consider development proposals and their impact on important soil resources. There are a number of suggested additions to strengthen the overall policy including specific issues around mitigation/compensation requirements, carbon assessments, and the need to protect potential historic environment assets/archaeology.

Policy 33(a) & 33(b)

This is supported as an overarching principle to protect valuable soil resources.

Policy 33(c)

In terms of site specific assessment requirements this should be required to consider the whole-life CO2 emissions of the development.

In terms of displacement of peatland vegetation this should include specific reference to 'onsite' as the preference for reintegration, unless justified otherwise.

Policy 33 – other comments

Any assessment or identification of mitigation measures required should be considered during the determination of any planning application, rather than through conditional approval, as this will allow for any revisions/site changes to be implemented through the permission with appropriate consultee feedback.

Mitigation measures and compensation measures should be required. Compensation should include restoration of peatland. Compensation should also be required by way of a consequent restoration / measures to address the results of the carbon assessment, in accordance with the priority principles for the climate and biodiversity crises as stated in the introduction to sustainable places.

Peatland and bogs are a rich resource of the past, both in terms of artefactual remains ritually deposited to ancient landscapes and settlement and paleo-environmental evidence. This Policy does not specify the risk to unknown and known undesigned historic assets within peatland. Given the proactive restorative work being undertaken across Scotland, these assets are under threat and as such careful consideration, consultation and appropriate mitigation of the historic environment should be included in this policy.

Detailed comments

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 34 – Trees, Woodland & Forestry

Summary – page 110 The policy requires identification in plans of existing woodland and potential for expansion. Detailed policy provides protection for trees and woodland and supports sustainably managed woodland.

Q52. Do you agree that this policy will expand woodland cover and protect existing woodland?

No. The policy goes some way to protect woodland and the protection of ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees is welcomed. There is insufficient obligation however to promote the expansion of woodland or compensation for lost trees or woodland.(see detailed comments below).

Detailed Comments

Policy 34 Introduction.

The introduction is a broad requirement to expand woodland which is supported. Forestry could be mentioned separately here to more clearly distinguish between the two and recognise the benefits of forestry for CO2 and recreation but not conflate it with the much greater biodiversity, landscape and ecosystem service benefits of more natural woodland. The title of the policy references woodland and forestry but only woodland is addressed.

Policy 34(a)

The first sentence is supported, particularly setting out potential for enhancement or expansion. The second sentence requires rewording. It is not clear whether this is requiring additional information to be set out in the LDP or this spatial strategy is simply included in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

Policy 34(b)

The policy protecting against the loss of ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees is supported. It is not clear the relationship between the categories of ancient woodland given the approaches to different categories as set out in the Implementation of the Control on Woodland Removal Policy. If it is intended to only refer to ASNW then reference to other categories must be provided or the policy is too restrictive. The status of a LEPO woodland on the ATI for example would be best surveyed before a decision could be made on its value. Much of this policy will be subject to the results of both tree and woodland surveys, the requirements for which could be set out here, otherwise they will be required to be detailed in LDPs.

The second bullet point is supported although this should be reviewed to be clear whether “high biodiversity value...” applies to just individual trees, hedgerows and trees, or all three. Non native / mixed woodland of high biodiversity value should also be included here. The protection of trees and woodlands should also be extended to those with landscape, cultural, recreational or amenity value. For the avoidance of doubt all native woodland is of high biodiversity value.

Both the first and second bullet point is suitable for irreplaceable habitat but may be too restrictive for others where a very strong presumption against removal might apply but mitigation and public benefit factors counteract the degree of removal.

The third bullet point is presumably intended to read “severing of *connectivity between*” . This would be better phrased as “fragmenting or impairing connectivity between”.

As with peatland a carbon assessment of the impact of the loss should be required to inform compensation.

Policy 34(b)

This paragraph could be reworded to better reflect the climate and biodiversity crises. All woodland removal should be avoided, minimised and mitigated before compensation is

considered. Development proposals should not result in woodland removal unless it is shown that the design shows that removal is unavoidable, mitigation and compensation is provided and it achieves the benefits stated. Compensatory planting cannot continue to be a general expectation but should be required from all development.

A general expectation for compensatory planting is insufficient and does not address the climate or biodiversity crises but risks business as usual. Compensation must be required for any loss. A separate paragraph on compensation is preferred with allowance for planning authorities to tailor compensation requirements to the value of the resource that is lost. The value for which compensation is to be provided could be set out such as carbon, flood, biodiversity and amenity values and at least an expectation that compensatory planting will be more than 1:1 in line with best practice.

Policy 34(d)

This paragraph is supported, although integrating woodland into design should be demonstrated rather than just considered.

Policy 34(e)

Support for new woodlands is supported. Reference to the right tree in the right place guidance here is recommended. A clear definition of woodland is required to ensure this paragraph has the intended effect, as much commercial exotic forestry could be argued to be sustainably managed.

This Policy does not specify the risk to unknown and known undesignated historic assets when identifying forestry/woodland operations. The importance of early consultation with the HER in advance of woodland creation schemes etc is crucial to ensuring responsible management and mitigation to our evolving landscapes.

Part 3 – National Planning Policy – Distinctive Places – Policy 35 – Coasts

Summary – page 111

An updated policy on coasts requires plans to consider adaptation to future climate impacts, supports development in areas of developed shoreline provided coastal protection measures are not required, and minimises development in undeveloped coastal areas unless it supports the blue economy, net zero, the economy or communities.

Q53. Do you agree that this policy will help our coastal areas adapt to climate change and support the sustainable development of coastal communities?

Response - Yes the proposed policy approach proposed is considered appropriate.

Detailed comments

Delivering Our Spatial Strategy Part 4

Part 4 – Delivering Our Spatial Strategy

Summary – page 112 – 114

The delivery of the strategy and realising of ambitions will require collaborative action from the public and private sectors as well as wider communities. These actions will range across different scales and include a mix of strategic and project investments. The implementation and monitoring of the delivery of strategic actions and key developments will be important.

A detailed delivery programme will be produced to accompany the final NPF4. The approach to delivery is expected to draw on the key delivery mechanisms of:

- Aligning resources
- Infrastructure First
- Delivery of National Developments
- Development Plan Policy and Regional Spatial Strategies
- Monitoring

Q54. Do you agree with our proposed priorities for the delivery of the spatial strategy?

As a general comment, mention of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) is quite light touch in Draft NPF4, particularly in respect of their relationship with NPF4 and their status within the planning hierarchy. As a result, it is increasingly unclear what the role and purpose of RSS's will/should be in respect of delivering upon NPF4 aims, and the expectations as to what degree and in what manner Local Development Plans should reflect their content. In its current format, with a lack of clarity around the relationship between Draft NPF4 and RSS's there is a risk of these regional strategies becoming meaningless. This situation is likely to become further complicated with the introduction of more Regional Land-Use Partnerships in time.

Support HOPS response on this matter and would welcome an organisational chart which establishes the hierarchy, context, roles and inter-relationships between these key planning documents and strategies. (NPF4, RSS, RLUPs, LDPs, LPPs)

Detailed Comments

- (Page 114) The Compulsory Purchase Order process is not fit for purpose – query where the reference is to Compulsory Sales Orders, and how do you get the private sector providers on board?

Part 4 – Delivering Our Spatial Strategy

Summary – page 112 – 114

As per summary provided under Question 54.

Q55. Do you have any other comments on the delivery of the spatial strategy?

The resourcing of a planning service goes way beyond the full cost recovered via Development Management fees and extends beyond planning services. A range of stakeholders within local authorities (transport planning, environmental health, greenspace etc) and key agencies (SW, TS, SEPA etc) all contribute to delivering the NPF.

Detailed comments

None

Annexes Part 5

Part 5 – Annex A – NPF4 Outcomes Statement

Q56. Do you agree that the development measures identified will contribute to each of the outcomes identified in Section 3A(3)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997?

Summary – pages 115-117

This statement sets out how the Scottish Ministers consider that development will contribute to each of the outcomes identified in Section 3A(3)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The outcomes are as follows:

- (a) Meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people
- (b) Improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland
- (c) Increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland
- (d) Improving equality and eliminating discrimination
- (e) Meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, within the meaning of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, contained in or set by virtue of that Act
- (f) Securing positive effects for biodiversity

No comment as this will depend on the availability of support in relation to resources, legislation and other agencies.

Detailed comments

None

Part 5 – Annex B – Housing Numbers

Summary – page 118

This annex sets out the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each planning authority in Scotland. This is to meet the requirement of Section 3A(3)(d) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Q57. Do you agree with the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) numbers identified above?

The draft NPF4 sets a proposed MATHLR for Perth & Kinross of 8,500 over a 10 year period and this is supported.

Detailed comments

The initial draft estimates of the MATHLR for Perth & Kinross were considered by officers to be very low. PKC was in the fortunate position that we had already commissioned an HNDA, in collaboration with the other TAYplan authorities, and informed by this work a robust case was made to increase the MATHLR. The revised MATHLR PKC of 8,500 over a 10 year period, as was proposed by the Council, is therefore welcomed. It must be noted, however, that without the work which was already underway on the HNDA we would not have been provide as detailed a response to the interim draft MATHLR. This raises the question of how those authorities, which did not have an up-to-date HNDA, could have been expected to provide a similarly informed response.

Part 5 – Annex C – Glossary of Definitions

Summary – pages 120 - 128

Definitions of various terms used in NPF4

Q58. Do you agree with the definitions set out? Are there any other terms it would be useful to include in the glossary?

Detailed comments

Affordable home/affordable housing

Housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on low incomes. This can include social rented, mid-market rented, shared-ownership, shared equity, housing sold at discount (including plots for self-build), self-build plots **not all self build is affordable** and low-cost housing without subsidy.

Brownfield

Land which has previously been developed. The term may cover vacant or derelict land, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable. **Does this exclude rural brownfield?**

Community Hub

A community hub is a multipurpose centre, such as a community centre, medical centre or school, that provides a range of high quality and cost effective services to the local community, **So a great building mismanaged would not qualify, this mixes the building issues with service quality.** with the potential to develop new services in response to changing community needs.

Enabling Development

Enabling development is development that would not be in compliance with local and/or national planning policies, and not normally be permitted, except for the fact that it would secure the future conservation of a historic environment asset and the wider benefits outweigh the impacts of not adhering to those policies. **This needs thought trough and perhaps more guidance, is it about public good, building good or economic good?**

Short-term let

The use of a dwellinghouse (a residential house or flat) for rental by persons other than the owner for short periods and for financial or other remuneration. Typically includes properties advertised as being available for holiday let, although can apply to other situations. **Define short periods or link to legislation.**

Strategic Transport Network

Includes the trunk road and rail networks. Its primary purpose is to provide the safe and efficient movement of strategic long-distance traffic between major centres, although in rural areas it also performs important local functions. **Is this just Trunk roads in our view it should extend to all key routes A93 and CTRLR being examples**