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**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
26 JANUARY 2021**

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 POSITION STATEMENT**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND  
FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the recently published National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 Position Statement and to agree the Council's response.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;**

- (i) **note the content of the National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement and the timescales for publication of the National Planning Framework 4;**
- (ii) **agree the response set out in Appendix 1 be submitted to the Scottish Government;**
- (iii) **agree the content of the National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement be reflected in the Council's annual Development Plan Scheme; and**
- (iv) **agree the content of National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement be considered by the Council's Climate Change Strategy Working Group, Moray Economic Partnership, Local Development Plan Infrastructure Delivery Group and the Asset Management Group, in particular the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the implications for Council services.**

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Scottish Government is preparing a new spatial plan for Scotland that will look ahead to 2050 to set out where future development can bring benefits for people, the economy and the environment. The 4<sup>th</sup> NPF will show what Scotland could look like as a place in 2050 and it will include national planning policies, a clear and coherent plan for our future development and it will form part of the development plan for considering day to day development management decisions.
- 3.2 The Position Statement sets out current thinking to inform further discussions on the content of a revised framework for consultation and follows on from a Call for Ideas which was reported to a meeting of this Committee on 25 February 2020 (para 12 of minute refers). The Scottish Government expects to lay NPF4 before the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2021 and will consult publicly on fuller details at that stage, with the long term strategy for 2050 driven by the overarching goal of addressing climate change. The Position Statement stresses the importance of “place” based planning and the need for a significant shift to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.
- 3.3 NPF4 will be informed by the indicative Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) which planning authorities, working collaboratively or individually, were invited to submit. Moray’s draft iRSS was approved at a meeting of this Committee on 15 September 2020 (para 15 of minute refers). Feedback from the Scottish Government on the draft iRSS is expected at the end of January with an opportunity to further develop and submit a final version at the end of April to inform the preparation of NPF4.
- 3.4 An electronic copy of the Position Statement has been uploaded to CMIS along with the agenda for this meeting.

### **4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The Position Statement is summarised briefly below, with the Council’s proposed responses to the set questions included in **Appendix 1**.
- 4.2 To address the long term overarching goal, the Scottish Government expect NPF4 to focus on 4 key outcomes;
- (i) Net-Zero emissions
- Prioritising the types and locations of development that will help meet our emissions reduction targets
  - Build on the Climate Change Plan and implement actions from the UK Climate Change Committee
  - Plan places to reduce the need to travel and build in natural solutions
  - Buildings will be more energy efficient and sustainable
  - Facilitate decarbonised heating and electricity generation and distribution

(ii) A Wellbeing Economy

- Create healthier, fairer and more prosperous places ensuring future development contributes to a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.
- Identify and support development that works with our assets, key sites and opportunities for strategic investment
- Take a flexible and enabling approach to future business and employment uses
- Support development in the parts of Scotland where quality jobs and investment are most needed, with policies on community wealth building and sustainability
- Support jobs that help to maintain and strengthen strategic transport and digital connectivity

(iii) Resilient Communities

- Focus on people and quality of areas where we live
- Apply concepts such as 20 minute neighbourhoods so the places we live and work are more resilient and sustainable.
- Focus on the location, quality and type of homes needed for people of all ages, reflecting long term demographics
- Introduce an infrastructure first approach, including natural networks and sustainable travel, ensuring we have fair access to the services we need to support communities
- Introduce policies which support the 6 public health priorities, promote inclusion and equality and help places adapt to the long term impacts of climate change

(iv) Better, Greener Places

- Support development that reflects the character and identity of our distinctive places and neighbourhoods, safeguards and restores our natural assets and tackles geographic disadvantages including areas needing regeneration and promoting the re-use of vacant and derelict land and buildings.
- Ensure that our approach to development focusses more on place
- Include stronger and updated policies on design and place-making
- Policies on city and town centres will be broadened to better reflect a wider range of potential uses in anticipation of continuing change.
- Future proof our natural and historic assets and coasts and work to restore the resilience of Scotland's ecosystems
- Enhance policies on vacant and derelict land to encourage innovation and development and promote a brownfield first approach to development
- Policies on rural development will positively encourage development that helps to repopulate and sustain rural areas and stimulate rural economic growth and sustainability.

4.3 A summary of proposals and policy changes being considered are included under each of these key outcomes. Key opportunities to achieve these outcomes include;

- Building 20 minute neighbourhoods, planning homes with everyday infrastructure including schools, community hubs, local shops and healthcare to significantly reduce the need to travel. This is also to apply to existing places and how they can be transformed. Improve integration between planning and transport.
- Strengthening the preference for re-use of existing buildings.
- Shifting future development away from greenfield land and actively enabling the redevelopment of vacant and derelict land.
- Strengthening support for development in town centres and restricting out of town retail and leisure to support the transition away from car dependent developments.
- Stimulating new models of low carbon living in rural areas as well as towns and cities through further investment in digital infrastructure, remote working and creating community hubs.
- Actively encouraging much wider use of sustainable and recycled materials in new developments.
- Significantly strengthening our policies to secure low carbon heating solutions.
- Supporting renewable energy developments, including the repowering and extension of existing wind farms, new and replacement grid infrastructure, carbon capture and storage and hydrogen networks.
- Potential for rural development to facilitate woodland creation and expansion.
- Promoting nature based solutions, expanding green infrastructure, biodiversity and natural spaces to make our places greener, healthier and more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Restricting peat extraction and development on peatland, and facilitating restoration through permitted development rights.
- Removing the need for planning permission for active travel and electric vehicle charging points to ensure roll out of infrastructure.
- Set out the housing land requirement for each authority, informed by national analysis and local output.
- Design at the heart of any new housing development, details which seem insignificant in isolation such as orientation, colour, heights, access to green spaces collectively create better places that support our well-being.
- Looking at mechanisms for more land to be released from the longer term supply, once building begins on sites which have planning permission.
- Planning can support our internationally renowned food and drink sector by protecting our natural assets that underpin production and facilitating the development of production and processing facilities.
- Planning can re-imagine city and town centres, with new policies helping to respond to current and future challenges so centres can adapt and be vibrant, creative, enterprising and accessible places to live, work and visit.

4.4 The Position Statement invites responses which will be used along with the responses to the Call for Ideas to shape NPF4 which will be published for consultation in Autumn 2021. The deadline for responses to the Position Statement is 19 February 2021.

4.5 Early project planning for the MLDP2025 will begin with the annual Development Plan Scheme which will be reported to this Committee in March

2021. The Scheme will include programming of work to look at 20 minute neighbourhoods and infrastructure planning, to inform the new LDP and importantly the new Evidence Report and Gatecheck process which replaces the Main Issues Report stage.

## **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

NPF4 Position Statement sets out current thinking and possible policy changes under 4 themes, which all support the Corporate Plan and LOIP, particularly regarding supporting economic development and growth, climate change, safeguarding our natural and built environment and resilient communities.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

The NPF4 Position Statement has no legal status, however, when NPF4 is adopted it will form part of the statutory Development Plan for development management decision making.

The concepts and proposed policy changes in the Position Statement reach beyond the Local Development Plan and will impact on other policies and strategies of the Council such as the Climate Change Strategy, Moray Economic Strategy and concepts such as the 20 minute neighbourhoods could have implications for the School Estate Strategy, the Council workforce Strategy and have wider impacts than just spatial planning in terms of how the Council conducts business.

### **(c) Financial implications**

None at this stage. However, the financial implications will be fully considered when NPF4 is published.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

None.

### **(e) Staffing Implications**

To implement the requirements of NPF4 and the range of other new statutory requirements emerging from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 will require additional staffing resources, which will be fully considered when NPF4 is published.

### **(f) Property**

None at this stage.

### **(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

None at this stage.

### **(h) Consultations**

Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive Economy, Environment and Finance, the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager, the Senior Engineer Transportation, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Development Management and Building Standards Manager and Paul Connor (Principal Accountant) and their comments incorporated into the report.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 The Scottish Government is currently preparing NPF4 which will set out a long term spatial framework and planning policies to 2050 for Scotland. Following a Call for Ideas, a Position Statement has been published setting out the Scottish Government's current thinking and potential policy changes.**

**6.2 This report summarises the Position Statement and sets out proposed responses to a series of consultation questions which will be used to inform NPF4 which is anticipated to be published in Autumn 2021.**

Author of Report:	Gary Templeton, Strategic Planning and Development Manager
Background Papers:	National Planning Framework 4 Position Statement.
Ref:	