

PE1748/B

Scottish Government submission of 4 November 2019

The Petition calls on the Scottish Parliament “*to urge the Scottish Government to provide specific provision within the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and the Scottish Planning Policy for small communities which:*

- *Provides for pre-development community asset and infrastructure audit when an area is identified as being able to accommodate large-scale, urban growth and;*
- *Protects areas considered by its community to be high value scenic assets and at risk of the coalescence of communities”.*

These provisions are intended to ensure that issues encountered by the petitioners as a result of local development pressures are addressed in the future. The Glasgow and Clyde Valley Development Plan identified Gartcosh/Glenboig as a planned Community Growth Area in 2006. Since then, North Lanarkshire Council has prepared a number of documents setting out a vision for the development of the area. I note that the Council has also been asked to comment on the petition so may provide you with further information on this work.

Scottish Ministers are committed to empowering communities and encouraging participation and collaborative working in local areas. The Place Principle, adopted by the Scottish Government and COSLA, requests that all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place, need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places. The Place Standard, developed in partnership by Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland, is a practical tool which can support the Place Principle, allowing communities to assess their local area and identify local assets and opportunities.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states that planning should direct the right development to the right place. Spatial strategies within development plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area, identifying the most sustainable locations for long term development, and where necessary, reviewing the boundaries of green belts.

SPP sets out that green belt may be designated for a range of purposes including protecting the character setting and identity of a settlement and that the planning system should facilitate positive change while maintaining and enhancing distinctive landscape character. The need for, and the detailed boundaries of green belts, is a matter for local authorities as the planning authorities for their areas.

SPP also states that early discussion should take place between local authorities, developers and relevant agencies to ensure that investment in necessary new infrastructure is addressed in a timely manner.

Through our review of the planning system, the infrastructure first approach to planning and development was identified as a priority and this will be taken forward by a number of measures, including through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019,

forthcoming regulations and guidance. Although the term infrastructure ‘audit’ is not used, the 2019 Act aims to ensure that robust information and analysis regarding infrastructure provision is established at an early stage to inform the preparation of NPF and Local Development Plan’s. A key element of requiring Planning Authorities to produce an evidence report, which will be subject to scrutiny, prior to preparing a Local Development Plan is to ensure that infrastructure considerations are properly addressed and central to the process of plan making. As we progress formulating planning policy for NPF 4 as well as the preparation of guidance for new style LDP’s, we will consider further how best we can incorporate the need for appropriate infrastructure analysis as part of this.

The new Planning Act includes a number of measures which are intended to improve the process of preparing local development plans, and the involvement of communities in influencing the future of their places. In addition to housing needs, the local development plan must take account of the health of the population and their health needs, and the education needs of the population, the likely effects of development on those health and education needs, and the infrastructure of the district, including health care and education facilities.

In preparing their evidence report, the first stage in the local development plan, the planning authority must show how it has sought the views of “the public at large” and community councils, and how those views have been taken into account. There are also requirements to consult widely on the proposed plan before it is finalised. We want community engagement on local development plans to be more effective than it has been in the past. Scottish Ministers are to issue guidance on how to do this, and the Act will require planning authorities to have regard to that guidance. Community bodies will also be able to prepare local place plans, setting out their views on how the area should develop, and these must be taken into account in the local development plan. A local place plan can include reference to assets which are particularly valued by the community, which may be open spaces as well as buildings or structures.

We have recently commenced work on preparing Scotland’s fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). NPF4 will be a long term spatial plan looking to 2050 that aims to set out where development and infrastructure is needed to support sustainable and inclusive growth. It will guide spatial development, set out our national planning policies, designate national developments and highlight regional spatial priorities.

For the first time, the new National Planning Framework will incorporate Scottish Planning Policy. Spatial and thematic planning policies will be addressed in one place and NPF4 will have the status of development plan for planning purposes. This is a change to the current position and will mean that the policies in NPF4 should inform day to day decision making. NPF4 will also be relevant to regional spatial strategies and important for communities as they develop their Local Place Plans.

NPF4 will be approved by Parliament, before it is adopted by Scottish Ministers, and we aim to have a draft laid in Parliament in Autumn 2020. The Parliament can then

scrutinise the draft NPF4 for a period of up to 120 days, and we will also formally seek public representations on it at that stage. We are committed to encouraging interest and wide public involvement in the preparations of NPF4 and in early 2020 will be undertaking a period of extensive early engagement to inform the preparation of the draft. We will engage with stakeholders in the public, community, voluntary and private sectors, as well as academic experts and professional bodies. A particular effort will be made to reach beyond the people and organisations normally involved in planning consultations. As you know, we are working with stakeholders to design and take forward a collaborative process for preparing NPF4.

The preparation of NPF4 will be supported by a participation statement setting out how, where and when Ministers will engage on the preparation of the framework. This will be published shortly and will contain details of events including those targeted at community groups. We also are working on the provision of a small grant scheme for community groups to get involved in planning.

As our policy development process progresses, we will reflect further on the detail of this petition. I strongly encourage all stakeholders to participate in the early engagement phase for NPF4 and hope that the Gartcosh Tenants and Residents Association are able to participate and input their views and experience.