

PE1748/F

COSLA submission of 11 November 2019

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to provide specific provision within the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF 3) and the Scottish Planning Policy for small communities which:

- Provides for a 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.

As the representative voice of local government in Scotland, COSLA welcomes the invitation from the Committee to respond to Petition 1748: Provide protection for small communities in the Scottish Planning Policy. In our response, we have opted to focus on the principles of the petition, rather than comment on the specifics of individual examples.

As strong advocates of subsidiarity, COSLA supports early community engagement in the Scottish planning system, however we do not consider National Planning Framework 3 or Scottish Planning Policy to be an appropriate vehicle for the ambition of the Petition. Existing policy mechanisms exist at both a local and national level, however there are a number of emerging areas which may provide alternative opportunities to achieve the results sought by the petition.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 contains a number of provisions which aim to enhance community involvement in the planning system. As well as setting out provisions for effective and early community engagement in Local Development Plans, the Act creates provisions for Local Place Plans. Local Authorities are required to assist communities in preparing these and to take them into account when producing the statutory development plans. This has the ability to provide communities with a more appropriate mechanism to address the themes highlighted in the petition than National Planning Framework 3 or Scottish Planning Policy.

Additionally, a consultation process for developing National Planning Framework 4 will commence in the summer of 2020. Part of this work will involve the incorporation of Scottish Planning Policy into the National Planning Framework, thus combining. We would urge any communities who seek to influence national planning policy to utilise the opportunities this presents.