

SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY AND THIRD NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK MAIN ISSUES REPORT CONSULTATIONS

1. Reason for Report

1.1 To advise Members of the Board of a draft Scottish Planning Policy Consultation, and agree a response.

1.2 To advise Members of the Board of the Third National Planning Framework Main Issues Report Draft Framework for Consultation, and agree a response.

2. Background

2.1 An integrated Scottish Planning Policy document was first published in 2010 to supersede and replace a raft of individual Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), and other guidance documents.

2.2 The first National Planning Framework was published in 2004 as a non-statutory document. It set out a strategy for Scotland's development to 2025, providing a national context for development plans and planning decisions and helping to inform the wider programmes of government, public agencies and local authorities.

2.3 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 put the Framework on a statutory footing. The legislation places duties on Scottish Ministers to prepare the Framework with the objective of contributing to sustainable development and to review it every 5 years.

2.4 At the meeting on 18 January 2013 Members of the Board were advised of the proposed Third National Planning Framework, and agreed a consultation response and National Project Nominations.

2.5 A mandatory requirement of any development proposal to be considered for inclusion in NPF3 was that it must be of more than regional significance. To address this requirement the response considered the external connectivity issues that emerge from the Regional Transport Strategy and its associated Delivery Plan in terms of four major transport corridor themes:

- Connectivity with Edinburgh
- Cross-border connectivity
- Access to Prestwick Airport
- Links to Loch Ryan Ports

3. Key Points

3.1 The Minister for Local Government and Planning launched the National Planning Framework 3 Main Issues Report and draft Scottish Planning Policy for consultation on Tuesday 30 April. The consultation period for both documents extends to Tuesday July 23, 2013. Documents associated with the review consultation can be accessed at the following web link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review>

3.2 The sections of SPP include:

- Planning Series
- Introduction
- Principal Policies
 - Sustainable Economic Growth
 - Sustainable Development
 - Engagement
 - Climate Change
 - Placemaking
 - Location of New Development
 - Spatial Strategies
 - Town Centres
 - Rural Development
- Subject Policies
 - Buildings
 - Natural Resources
 - Movement
 - Utilities
- Annex – Parking Policies and Standards
- Glossary.

3.3 Many of the questions within the consultation refer to matters over which SWestrans would have no locus. There are no questions within the consultation questionnaire that are specific to the Movement subject. However, the response highlights issues of strategic transport concern:

- That patterns of rural development will have an impact on future traffic and transport demand;
- the potential impact of windfarm development on the region's landscape as a tourism asset, particularly in relation to long-distance cycle routes and rural rail routes;
- the role of digital infrastructure in reducing the need to travel.

3.4 A draft response to the SPP Consultation is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.

3.5 The draft Third National Planning Framework Main Issues Report considers the national Spatial Strategy in relation to four themes:

- A Low Carbon Place
- A Natural Place to Invest
- A Successful, Sustainable Place
- A Connected Place

The draft Framework goes on to identify *Areas of Coordinated Action*, and *Proposed National Developments*.

3.6 The connectivity themes identified in the earlier SWestrans submission (listed in paragraph 2.7) would all fall within the Connected Place theme of the draft NPF3.

3.7 The **Low Carbon Place** theme is concerned mainly with Energy.

3.8 The **Natural Place to Invest** theme is concerned with environmental and natural resources. Key themes from the earlier engagement identified under this heading include:

- Recognition that the components of our environment are inter-connected;
- Strong support for the Central Scotland Green Network;
- Support for realising the full potential of recreational assets like canals and long-distance paths;
- A high value placed on landscape, especially our most special landscapes, and attention to ensuring that new onshore wind farms reflect their quality; and
- Emerging ideas for national level ecological networks.

3.9 The **Successful, Sustainable Place** theme is concerned with sustainable development. The document recognises that “rural disadvantage remains an issue for some parts of Scotland” (4.10), and that “Connections and transport infrastructure are key to a successful future for towns and cities” (4.22). It goes on to comment that “In the area of Galloway and Southern Ayrshire, classified as most fragile... a biosphere reserve and dark skies park is providing new opportunities for tourism, sustainable community development and environmental management.” However, these observations do not appear to translate into any national intervention. Dumfries is recognised as a ‘Strategic Hub’, and Prestwick International as an ‘Enterprise Area’, but GLA Triangle is overlooked, and indeed no Enterprise Area is identified in the South of Scotland.

3.10 The **Connected Place** theme is concerned with strategic transport connectivity, stating “Our ambition is to maintain and develop good internal and global connections”. The key objectives identified are:

- Decarbonising transport and reducing the need to travel;
- Links within and between cities and their regions;
- Links to support economic investment, recognising the role of good connectivity in supporting balanced and sustainable growth;
- Rural links, including lifeline routes; and
- International connections.

3.11 Under the objective of *Decarbonisation of transport and reducing the need to travel* it is suggested that NPF3 could “promote sustainable settlement patterns that reduce the need to travel, and... substantially increasing active travel...” (5.9) The document recommends that “individual local authorities should consider how best to adapt existing streets and places to facilitate more walking and cycling within their areas.”

3.12 As a region without a city the South West is overlooked by the *Links between cities and their regions* objective.

3.13 The objective of *Links to support economic investment* cites VisitScotland's emerging tourism development strategy which “identifies the importance of gateways and key entry points to Scotland...”

3.14 Under *Connections to rural areas* the draft framework acknowledges that “low carbon transport options can be more limited in rural areas, and there will continue to be a need for travel by road”, (5.26) and “Lifeline links to... remote parts of the mainland remain essential” (5.27) These views echo the Regional Transport Strategy and the GoSmart Dumfries bid document, which both affirm the continuing legitimacy of essential car use as part of the sustainable travel mix.

3.15 The importance of gateways is considered further under *International connections*. Cairnryan is identified within a list of top 16 ports (as is Stranraer also), with the need for “good landward transport links for passengers and freight” (5.30). Airport Enhancements are identified as a proposed National Development, including Prestwick. The trunk roads A77 and A75 Euroroute, and A74(M) are recognised as Key Transport Routes, together with the proposed High Speed Rail link. However, despite the cross-border links no gateway location within Dumfries and Galloway is identified on the cross-border corridor.

3.16 It is disappointing that the draft framework does little to address the connectivity issues identified by SWestrans in its submission to the invitation for proposals. In particular:

- Connectivity with Edinburgh – connecting regional to national capital;
- Cross-border connectivity – poor connectivity for communities on the West Coast Main Line;
- Access to Prestwick Airport – Prestwick included as an Enterprise Area, and in proposed National Development for Airport Enhancements, but critical A76 access corridor from Dumfries and GLA Triangle is not mentioned;
- Links to Loch Ryan Ports – identified as substantially complete.

3.17 The draft Framework identifies six Areas of Coordinated Action. *Area 6: South West Coast* indicates a corridor extending from North Ayrshire southwards along the coast to Stranraer.

- With reference to the National Project for port facilities at Cairnryan included in NPF2, the document suggests “this work has been largely completed – significant associated road improvements have been and are being delivered.” Progressive road improvements since NPF2 have been welcomed by the Board. However, upgrade at Drummuckloch to Innermessan (which is essential to facilitate access to Loch Ryan ports from A75, and also allow completion of National Cycle Route 73 to connect the regional cycling network to the port) remains outstanding.
- It is proposed that Prestwick Airport, including the adjacent Enterprise Area site... are recognised as a key priority within NPF3.
- The draft framework also indicates that “Links to Prestwick Airport and Cairnryan/Stranraer are continuing priorities. Links from the area to the M74, and the strategic investment opportunities it provides, and the role of the wider area as a gateway to Scotland, could also support the long-term regeneration of the area.” While this recognition is welcome, it remains unclear how this translates into interventions to address the constraints of peripherality on the region identified by the Regional Transport Strategy.

3.18 The draft response proposes an additional Area of Co-ordination to cover the east of Dumfries and Galloway.

3.19 The draft Framework identifies 14 Proposed National Developments. Of particular relevance to the South West are:

- National Cycling and Walking Network;
- High Speed Rail; and
- Airport Enhancements (including Prestwick).

However, there are no specific proposals located within Dumfries & Galloway.

3.20 Mapping in the draft Framework recognises a number of long-distance cycling and walking paths in the south west, including:

- National Cycle Route 7;
- National Cycle Route 74;
- Southern Upland Way;
- Annandale Way;
- Mull of Galloway Trail.

However, key routes in development are not recognised, including:

- National Cycle Route 73;
- EuroVelo Route 1;
- Southern Upland Cycleway.

As a planning document it is appropriate that NPF3 recognises these routes.

3.21 The draft Framework states:

“We think the vision should be a linked network, connecting our main centres of population, key tourist resources and public transport hubs.”

There is interface between the rail network and the long-distance path network at every station in south west Scotland except Kirkcubbin, as follows:

- Gretna – NCR7
- Annan – Annandale Way, NCR7
- Dumfries – NCR7
- Sanquhar – Southern Upland Way, (Southern Upland Cycleway)
- Lockerbie – NCR74
- Stranraer – Mull of Galloway Trail, Southern Upland Way, (NCR73, EuroVelo1, Southern Upland Cycleway)

3.22 It is clear from the mapping of routes in the south of Scotland that Moffat is at the hub of many long-distance routes. However, the nearest rail-head to Moffat is at Lockerbie, some 15 miles distant. The Regional Transport Strategy includes an aspiration for a station at Beattock to serve Moffat and the surrounding area, and there is a clear synergy of this aspiration with the proposed National Development for long-distance paths and trails.

3.23 Sustainable travel campaign group Transform Scotland has recently published a report on The Value of Cycle Tourism: Opportunities for the Scottish Economy, commissioned by Sustrans. The report estimates cycle tourism to be worth £239 million per annum to the Scottish economy, with massive scope for growth. Key recommendations are:

Strengthening Leadership and Collaboration

1. Strengthen leadership and coordination across the sector
2. Deliver better collaboration between local/regional stakeholders

Knowing Our Markets

3. Establish more comprehensive monitoring arrangements
4. Focus promotional activities on key market segments
5. Brand Scotland as a top destination for cycle touring
6. Develop key themed areas for leisure cycle tourism

Managing the Customer Journey

7. Continue the development and marketing of cycle routes
8. Enhance information provision and technology integration

Building Sustainable Tourism

9. Continue to support cycle events, and extend this support to smaller events
10. Create a development strategy for the growth of cycle tourism

3.24 The Transform Scotland report is available at <http://www.transformsotland.org.uk/value-of-cycle-tourism-report.aspx>.

3.25 The South West is well placed to benefit from the designation of a long distance network as a national project, and the development of cycle tourism:

- The home of Kirkpatrick McMillan, widely recognised as father of the pedal bicycle;
- A broad range of cycling tastes catered for, including leisure, long distance, BMX, and mountain biking;
- Extensive existing network of designated routes, routes in development, and non-designated network;
- Mountain biking facilities at multiple locations, including 7stanes sites;
- Recognised as a 'Biking Heaven' among those familiar with the region.

3.26 The City of Carlisle has an important transport hub role for communities in the south of Scotland, and a potentially economically critical role in the development of the National Project for High Speed Rail. Although it lies outside of Scotland it may be desirable for NPF3 to recognise Carlisle's role in Scottish transport networks.

3.27 A draft response to the Third National Planning Framework Main Issues Report and Draft Framework consultation is attached to this report as **Appendix 2**.

3.28 Members of the Board are asked to consider the issues arising from the draft Scottish Planning Policy and Third National Planning Framework Main Issues Report and Draft Framework, and agree responses.

4. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

5. Recommendations

Members of the Board are asked to:

- 5.1 agree the response to the Scottish Planning Policy Consultation Draft set out in Appendix 1; and**
- 5.2 agree the response to the Third National Planning Framework Main Issues Report and Draft Framework consultation set out in Appendix 2.**

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