

Appendix 1: Local Government and Communities Committee Report on NPF 2: Proposed Framework

– SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS –

Parliamentary process

- 1 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government should provide sufficient advance notice to the Parliament and stakeholders of the date of publication of future NPFs, so that issues that arose on this occasion in relation to the planning of Parliamentary scrutiny and stakeholder engagement, do not arise in future (paragraph 68).

Accessibility

- 2 The Committee invites the Scottish Government to seek to improve the accessibility of future NPF documents by using clear, jargon-free language to ensure that the reader is well informed about key issues and is equipped to contribute to, and engage in, the consultation process (paragraph 76).

Consultation and engagement

- 3 The Committee invites the Scottish Government to consider ways of further improving the consultation process so that local communities can be more effectively engaged in future NPF consultations (paragraph 92).
- 4 The Committee also recommends that for future NPFs, the Scottish Government should consider ways of improving general awareness, particularly at a local level, of the NPF and how this fits into the wider planning context. It suggests the Scottish Government gives consideration to whether there is a role for local authorities in maximising awareness (paragraph 93).
- 5 The Committee recommends that in future, the Scottish Government should put in place improved consultation mechanisms to be deployed when in the process of finalising its list of national developments, to allow for further engagement with stakeholders. It further recommends that this exercise should not be part of any consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment but a separate exercise (paragraph 109).
- 6 The Committee recommends that the Scottish Government should publish in future an Assessment Matrix of Candidate National Developments against the National Development Criteria, but that this should provide more detailed analysis and reasons why candidate national developments were accepted or rejected; and provide details of how the public and stakeholders can engage further with the Scottish Government on the revised list of national developments (paragraph 110).
- 7 The Committee recommends that in order to ensure openness and transparency, the Scottish Government should make arrangements to de-brief those who made suggestions for inclusion in the current and future lists of national developments, but which were rejected (paragraph 111).
- 8 The Committee also recommends that the Matrix should be published much earlier in the process, before publication of the Proposed Framework (paragraph 112).

Flexibility of the NPF2

- 9 The Committee recommends that where the NPF2 is adapted to take account of opportunities arising or changing circumstances, the Scottish Government should have an engagement strategy in place so that stakeholders and the Parliament (through its committees) are informed and have an opportunity to engage on changes made (paragraph 117).
- 10 The Committee recommends that, wherever possible, and given the prevailing economic situation, the Scottish Government should consider opportunities to bring forward projects which are publicly funded to help the construction industry in particular to retain capacity; and, in terms of those projects that are either wholly or partly funded by the private sector, it recommends that the Scottish Government should engage with the private sector to consider opportunities to bring forward such projects (paragraph 124).

Impact of the NPF2 on the planning system

- 11 The Committee will keep a watching brief on developments in the planning system that arise out of NPF2 and *Delivering Planning Reform* in particular, and it may decide to take further evidence from the Scottish Government at a later date once new systems and processes have bedded in (paragraph 138).

National developments

- 12 The Committee seeks clarity from the Scottish Government on the funding of national developments in terms of its future expenditure plans. Given its concerns in this regard, the Committee will take further evidence from the Scottish Government on the funding of infrastructure projects in due course (paragraph 171).
- 13 In addition to having further clarity around funding issues, the Committee recommends that the NPF2 Action Programme should contain a timetable for the delivery of national developments. Without this, the Committee is not clear whether some national developments that are listed are simply Scottish Government aspirations rather than firm commitments to deliver (paragraph 172).
- 14 The Committee looks forward to scrutinising the Action Programme in due course and to monitoring progress through ongoing dialogue with the Scottish Government (paragraph 173).

Next steps

- 15 The Committee looks forward to having an opportunity to consider the published NPF2 and the Action Programme and the extent to which the Scottish Government has taken into account the views of the Parliament (paragraph 178).

Local Government and Communities Committee Report:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/lgc/reports-09/lgr09-05-00-vol1.htm>

Parliamentary debate (5 March 2009):

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/officialReports/meetingsParliament/or-09/sor0305-02.htm#Col15526>