

Fourth National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) – summary of content

NPF4 consists of 3 parts:

- Part 1 – A National Spatial Planning Strategy for Scotland 2045
- Part 2 – National Planning Policy
- Part 3 - Annexes

Part 1 – A National Spatial Planning Strategy for Scotland 2045

NPF4 states that our future places will be planned in line with 6 overarching spatial principles:

- **Just transition.** We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.
- **Conserving and recycling assets.** We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.
- **Local living.** We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.
- **Compact urban growth.** We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- **Rebalanced development.** We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.
- **Rural revitalisation.** We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.

Through these spatial principles, it is intended that the national spatial strategy will support the planning and delivery of:

- **Sustainable places**, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity
- **Liveable places**, where we can all live, better, healthier lives; and
- **Productive places**, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

To support the national spatial, regional spatial strategies are identified for different parts of Scotland. West Dunbartonshire sits within the Central region. This area broadly covers central Scotland from the Glasgow city region and the Ayrshires in the west to Edinburgh city region in the east, including the Tay cities, the Forth Valley and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. The strategy for this area aims to:

- Provide net zero energy solutions including extended heat networks and improved energy efficiency, together with urban greening and improved low carbon transport.
- Pioneer low carbon, resilient urban living by rolling out networks of 20 minute neighbourhoods, future proofing city and town centres, accelerating urban greening, investing in net zero homes, and managing development on the edge of settlements.
- Target economic investment and build community wealth to overcome disadvantage and support a greener wellbeing economy.

There are eighteen National Developments identified in NPF4, some of which are nationwide and some relating to regions or specific locations. The National Developments relevant to the central region are:

- Pumped Hydro Storage (Scotland wide)
- Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure (Scotland wide)
- Circular Economy Material Management Facilities (Scotland wide)
- Urban Sustainable, Blue and Green Drainage Solutions (Edinburgh and Glasgow)
- Urban Mass/Rapid Transit Networks (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow)
- Central Scotland Green Network
- National Walking, Cycling and Wheeling Network (Scotland wide)
- Digital Fibre Network (Scotland wide)
- Clyde Mission
- High Speed Rail

Part 2 – National Planning Policy

On adoption, NPF4 will become part of the development plan, and the policies within it will be used to assess applications for planning permission. The table below sets out the number and names of the policies within NPF4, along with initial officer views on the nature of the policy (i.e. whether it is a general policy applying to all development proposals, or more related to development of a particular type or within a particular area), and a summary of the policy purpose.

Policy	Type	Comment
<i>Sustainable Places</i>		
1. Tackling the climate and nature crises	General – applies to all development	Very general policy stating significant weight to be given to climate and nature crises.
2. Climate mitigation and adaptation	General – applies to all development	Development to be sited and designed to minimise greenhouse gases and to adapt to risks from climate change.
3. Biodiversity	General – applies to all development, although some criteria are only applicable to certain development types.	Overall purpose is to enhance biodiversity. Quite a few criteria in this one, some applicable to all, one re national/major/EIA, one re local excluding householder.
4. Natural places	General – applies to all development	Overall purpose is to protect the natural environment, including designated sites and protected species. Although it protects the 'natural environment' in general, I would think in the main this policy will be used

Policy	Type	Comment
		in relation to protected sites and species.
5. Soils	Area specific	Protects all soils so applicable to all development affecting soils, but focus is on agricultural land, peatland and carbon-rich soils, and also undeveloped land.
6. Forestry, woodland and trees	Area or development specific	Supports expansion of woodland/tree cover and protects trees/woodland including 'veteran' trees (defined in Glossary), so goes beyond just protecting TPOs (which are not mentioned in policy).
7. Historic assets and places	Area or building specific	Protects historic assets and places with focus on designated sites/buildings but non-designated also protected.
8. Green belts	Area specific	Sets out the types of development acceptable in the green belt and other requirements to be met.
9. Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings	Area or building specific	Supports brownfield development and reuse of existing buildings. Limits greenfield development and demolition. Covers contaminated land.
10. Coastal development	Area specific	Sets out considerations for coastal development including coastal defence measures.
11. Energy	Development specific	Sets out considerations for renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies.
12. Zero waste	General – applies to all development	Sets out considerations re waste for all developments, supporting the minimisation of waste at the development and operational phases. Also sets out considerations for the assessment of waste infrastructure.
13. Sustainable transport	General – applies to all developments	Supports sustainable transport through a number of considerations, including low/no car parking in urban

Policy	Type	Comment
		locations well-served by public transport.
<i>Liveable Places</i>		
14. Design, quality and place	General – applies to all developments	Applies to the six qualities of a successful place (refer also to Annex D)
15. Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods	Development specific	This policy would be relevant to residential development and how accessible it is to services, and also for proposals for those services. The policy lists some relevant service types.
16. Quality homes	Development specific	Applicable to residential (including gypsy/ traveller/ travelling showpeople) and householder development. Includes affordable housing requirement, and requirement for Statement of Community benefit for development of 50+ houses.
17. Rural homes	Development specific	Applicable to proposals for new homes in rural areas (not clear if this includes green belt, but don't think so).
18. Infrastructure first	General – applies to all development	Covers proposals for infrastructure and also development impacting on infrastructure.
19 Heating and cooling	General – applies to (nearly) all development	Requires consideration of how buildings are to be heated. Covers heat networks and the use of waste and surplus heat. Also covers energy infrastructure development.
20. Blue and green infrastructure	Development or area specific	Protects and supports blue/green infrastructure (open space), including temporary open/green space. Requires effective management/maintenance plans including funding arrangements.
21. Play, recreation and sport	Development or area specific	This relates to development involving loss of sports facilities or open space. Also proposals for open space, sports facilities and play

Policy	Type	Comment
		equipment, and new streets and public realm.
22. Flood risk and water management	General – applies to all development	Relates to development at risk of flooding, or developments that could increase the risk of flooding. Consider public water mains connectivity. Supports natural flood risk management.
23. Health and safety	General – applies to all development	Considers health-related proposals, developments likely to have an adverse impact on health, air quality, noise, suicide, hazardous sites/substances, HSE/ONR/SEPA consultations, explosive sites.
24. Digital infrastructure	Development specific	Relates to the inclusion of, or proposals for, digital infrastructure.
<i>Productive Places</i>		
25. Community wealth building	Development specific	Relates to development that contributes to community wealth building, and also proposals linked to community ownership and management of land.
26. Business and industry	Development and area specific	Relates to business and industry uses and areas
27. City, town, local and commercial centres	Development and area specific	Relates to development within centres and for footfall generating uses (examples included). Also relates to hot food takeaways, betting offices, high interest money lending and drive-throughs. Town centre living.
28. Retail	Development specific	Relates to retail development. Applies sequential approach. Includes click-and-collect lockers
29. Rural development	Area specific	Relates to proposal for development in rural areas – presumably outwith green belt. Lists supported development types and assessment criteria.
30. Tourism	Development specific	Relates to proposals for or affecting tourist facilities.

Policy	Type	Comment
		Includes huts and short-term lettings.
31. Culture and creativity	Development specific	Relates to proposals for or affecting creative or cultural venues. Includes reference to public art requirements and 'agent of change principle'.
32. Aquaculture	Development and area specific	Relates to proposals for aquaculture, fish farms.
33. Minerals	Development specific	Limits fossil fuel extraction and does not support fracking. Protects and sets criteria for extraction of mineral deposits.

Part 3 - Annexes

The Annexes form an important part of the document and include:

Annex A: How to use this document – this annex sets out information on: the purpose of planning; the role of the National Planning Framework; the plan-led approach; and information on the structure and purpose of the document itself.

Annex B: National Developments Statements of Need – this annex sets out the statement of need and additional information in relation to the eighteen National Developments.

Annex C: Spatial Planning Priorities – this annex provides greater details on regional spatial priorities to guide the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans

Annex D: Six Qualities of Successful Place – this Annex sets matters to be considered when taking account of the six qualities of successful place. These qualities are: Healthy; Pleasant; Connected; Distinctive; Sustainable; and Adaptable.

Annex E: Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) – The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of units, that is to be provided by each planning authority for a 10 year period. The MATHLR is expected to be exceeded in each Local Development Plan's Housing Land Requirement. The MATHLR for the West Dunbartonshire planning authority is 2,100. This means that the next Local Development Plan for West Dunbartonshire will need to identify land for a minimum of 2,100 units for its 10 year timeframe.

Annex F: Glossary of definitions – this Annex provides an extensive explanation of terms used within NPF4.

Annex G: Acronyms – this Annex explains the acronyms used in NPF4.