

Key Messages



Health Policy Officer Network meeting

18 January 2022

National Planning Framework 4

Presenters:

- Ewan Masson, Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team
- Kate Smith, Scottish Parliament's Participation & Communities Team
- Alan Rehfish, SPICe

Attendees:

- Kimberley Somerside, Voluntary Health Scotland (Chair)
- Laura Jones, RNIB (Minutes)
- Ian McCall, Paths for All
- Jennifer Forsyth, Obesity Action Scotland
- Tom Steiner, Obesity Action Scotland
- Greg Thomas, See Me
- Anna Cowan, ASH Scotland
- Julia Simac, Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- Eloise Wilson, Fife Voluntary Action
- Aidan Collins, Alcohol Focus Scotland

Key Messages

The network heard from colleagues at the Scottish Parliament about the draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) consultation and engagement events. There was a discussion about how our sector could best engage with the consultation and the importance of health in planning.

Engagement: Ewan Masson, Community Outreach Team, Scottish Parliament, highlighted the 'NPF4 event' on 7 February, which Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) was helping facilitate. He confirmed there had been one call for views on NPF4 released via all committees, so there was to be a joined-up approach to stakeholder engagement. The Community Outreach Team was supporting communities and organisations to engage in the topic and the Local Government Committee was leading scrutiny. There was to be one engagement event instead of numerous, with VHS and the Community Outreach

Team asking, 'How do you use space to stay healthy and well?' looking at active travel, air quality, etc. The Health Social Care, & Sport Committee was to hold an evidence session in a week, with recommendations to be shared in a letter to the Local Government Committee. Ian McCall felt there had been plenty of opportunity to engage with NPF4, but it's a daunting prospect, which Kate Smith acknowledged. Jennifer Forsyth highlighted the challenging timescale for the committee's call for views.

NPF4: Alan Rehfisch, SPICe, provided a presentation on NPF4 then answered questions from the network. He said NPF4 basically set out what the government wants to do over the next 10 years. It included 35 policies covering green belts, housing, national developments, the list goes on. There are some big projects to implement, such as the Queensferry Crossing, and it includes a National Spatial Strategy. Every department in Scottish Government has pitched in, so a lot to cover, even space ports!

20-Minute Neighbourhoods: Kimberley Somerside agreed there was much to cover and started the conversation on 20-minute neighbourhoods. Alan felt in one sense this was the oldest concept in planning, to have everything on your doorstep within a walking distance. Fundamentally, it's the concept that people have access to daily needs without having to travel too far. It was based on research from south America on the '50-minute city'. Alan said there were three key elements: housing, transport, and public service. However, he noted from a planning point of view that in recent years local services had been withdrawn. There were questions about whether major hospital services which were recently centralised would need to be moved into more local hospitals. Furthermore, years of austerity had weakened services. Alan explained that the concept needed to go beyond distance, it needed to consider quality of infrastructure, terrain and who's 20-minutes we were discussing. He stressed that for this to be successfully delivered it required people to be included in the conversation.

The Consultation: Greg Thomas asked where we, as health policy officers, were best to insert our views given it's such a big consultation. Alan suggested looking at the policies section and picking a couple, noting there were 35. He said planners had to take these policies into consideration, so they were vital. He noted health might not be something the planning team think about, so they would find our input useful. Alan also explained why there ended up being a Scottish

Government consultation and parliamentary call for views at the same time, acknowledging this wasn't the norm.

Planning Decisions: Jennifer Forsyth, raised concerns about the prominence of health within NPF4, specifically with regards to health being considered in planning proposals. Alan explained the planning system assumed shops were legal and didn't care about what the shop contained. This meant lots of fast-food shops could be built in the one area, which was not good for people's health. He noted the same argument had been placed on betting shops, but the Scottish Government had not been caught up in planning for retail. Jennifer noted several English authorities had put in planning permissions to control where and how many fast-food places were in each community. Alan highlighted there was precedent in Scotland for these kinds of controls, such as the 'short term let control areas'. He explained every short term let would require a permission in order to control the number of lettings in each area. He said it's not that we don't have systems, it's a good planning system, and these controls were clearly possible.

Our Approach: The health policy officers then had a conversation about how each of our organisations was planning to respond to the consultation. Many had not yet decided, and it was highlighted that capacity was a problem for many of us. The potential for a joint-response was floated, however after the meeting it was decided that the time constraints would make this a challenge for sign-off. Members of the network said they would be happy to share responses amongst each other, which Kimberley was happy to facilitate.

These meeting notes were drafted by HPON co-chair Laura Jones, RNIB.

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