

To : All Heads of Planning
cc : Members of the Development Control Group of the Society of Chief
Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS); Chair of SCOTS.



Our ref: Aligning Planning and Roads Construction Consent (RCC)
18 January 2016

Dear Colleague

During our last Heads of Planning's event in November, I provided a brief update on the improvement pilot to align Planning and Roads Construction Consent (RCC). I am now writing to encourage all authorities to agree to align these two consents for housing developments and to follow a consistent structured approach in doing so.

Designing Streets is Scotland's policy statement on street design. It highlights the importance of planning permission and Roads Construction Consent (RCC) being run in parallel. Following research into the implementation of *Designing Streets* a framework to assist the alignment of consents was developed and subsequently tested. The work involved several local authorities and interviews with private sector developers who were working on live test cases. Key stakeholders including the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) were kept informed.

The testing of the framework showed that following this approach in practice can help to achieve the primary drivers of this work:

- to improve certainty for developers and applicants through earlier and more productive engagement; and
- to provide consistency across local authorities by a following a structured streamlined approach to processes, both before and during applications, for planning permission and roads consents.

Based on all the work to date I hope that you will agree that alignment of these consents will be a positive step to support more effective delivery and that Planning and Roads services should now support that. In doing this, it will be helpful to refer to the aligned consents framework that has been published. Further information, including how the approach can respond to local circumstances, can be found on our [Creating Places](#) website. To consistently achieve benefits from this approach, timescales for decisions on roads construction consent applications would best align with the statutory planning decision time periods.



Where processing agreements are deployed they can set out appropriate dates on roads matters for agreement. In addition, tests have shown that the [Quality Audit](#) approach can assist in tracking and recording shared decisions and the template in the *Designing Streets* toolbox (and in [SCOTS' National Roads Development Guide](#)) can be used in support of aligned consents. Using these tools should also further promote integrated working.

This work aims to mainstream the good practice that is evident already in a large number of local authorities. I am also aware that stakeholders, including SCOTS and Construction Scotland, are working to further raise awareness around how to improve street design processes and outcomes. Scottish Government continues to support stakeholders in these steps and encourage the sharing of good practice on how local authorities deal with street design proposals.

I would be very grateful for your support in working towards this greater alignment of consents which is also reflective of the commitment in the Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland to 'improve timescales and processes associated with development consents'

Finally, if you have any queries about this letter, or the guidance or advice that is linked to it, please do not hesitate to contact Stuart Watson at sm.watson@gov.scot.

Yours faithfully

John McNairney

Chief Planner