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From: Davie Black [davieb@ramblers.org.uk]
Sent: 20 June 2007 10:17
To: Planning and Sustainable Development
Subject: Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development

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Consultation Paper Statutory Guidance on Planning and Sustainable Development

I am responding to the consultation on behalf of the Ramblers' Association Scotland. We are happy for our comments to be made publicly available.

We are encouraged to see that there is a commitment put forward in the location and design of new developments, to providing for greater walking, cycling and public transport use. Making it easier to use non-motorised transport to move around locally is, we believe, an essential step forward to both reducing carbon emissions and creating a healthier lifestyle.

Core Paths will become a key means of walking and cycling around and between communities, and planning to connect with them in the design and layout of buildings, as well as the location of new developments, is a welcome proposal. In addition the creation of green open spaces and networks in urban areas can make travel much more pleasant than following a narrow route right beside a busy road.

It will be the detail of these intentions which will determine their effectiveness, and we will be looking forward to see the rolling out of these initiatives in new Development Plans.

Regarding the location of new development, mention is made of coastal impacts and flood-plain issues. A way of linking these issues would be to consider creating a Shoreline Protection Zone for coasts, lochs and watercourses.

Its purpose would be to act as climate change mitigation, allow for recreational access and provide wildlife habitat. This is not an entirely new concept, existing in some Scandinavian countries.

There is scope for discussion on how far in from the edge should be protected from housing or industrial development; 100m as a standard, maybe, but with room to expand in more sensitive areas and reductions in more developed, industrialised areas. It would have to be made clear that it is not intended to interfere with works necessary for agriculture, fishing or forestry. This would relate to new residential or commercial buildings mainly. A shoreline zone like this would help natural processes deal with unpredictable water levels arising from changing rainfall patterns.

Yours sincerely

Davie Black

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