

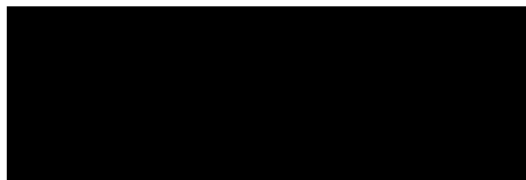
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**DEVELOPMENT &
ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 26 FEBRUARY 2008

REPORT NO: D&E 796- 08

BY CORPORATE DIRECTOR -ENVIRONMENT

CONTACT OFFICER

NIGEL HOOPER, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT

**DISCUSSION DRAFT: NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK
FOR SCOTLAND 2 (NPF 2)**

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the publication of a Scottish Government Discussion document and to recommend a response to the Consultation.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Scottish Government published a discussion draft of NPF 2 in January 2008 and is seeking views by 15 April 2008. Submitted views will be taken into consideration prior to publishing a finalised document before the end of 2008. A copy of the documents is available in the Members' Lounge.

2.2 NPF 2 builds on the framework initially set out in NPF 1 (published April 2004) and takes forward the spatial aspects of the Scottish Government's Policy commitments on sustainable economic growth, climate change and infrastructure investment. There is further emphasis on infrastructure improvements in support of the National Transport Strategy and (for the first time) designation of certain classes of development as "national".

2.3 NPF 2 is an important document and will be closely linked to the Government's investment plans. It will inform the investment programmes of public agencies and infrastructure providers.

2.4 Reference is made in a number of places throughout the document to issues of particular importance in East Dunbartonshire and these are identified in the following report.

2.5 A response to the document, with particular emphasis on its implications for East Dunbartonshire and the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Area is incorporated in Section 5 of this report.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

3.1 submits a copy of this paper as the Council's response to NPF 2

Head of Planning, Development and Property Assets

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A National Planning Framework Document was first published in April 2004 and established for the first time in a single document the spatial aspects of the Scottish Government's long-term programme for development across Scotland.
- 4.2 Draft NPF 2 updates the previous framework and provides significantly more detail of the Scottish Government's intentions with particular regard to commitments on sustainable economic growth, climate change (to enable movement towards a low carbon economy) and infrastructure improvements to support long-term development.
- 4.3 The paper provides an overview of Scotland at the present time, its land uses, natural environment, population and economy. East Dunbartonshire is identified as exhibiting (between 2001 and 2005) one of the highest levels of loss of employment in Scotland. This part of the paper also explores current housing issues and confirms the Government's concern that high prices which constrain people's tenure choices can "reduce Scotland's economic competitiveness, limit workforce mobility and skew wealth towards the top end of the housing market". It confirms that recent investment in Affordable Housing does not appear to "mirror the geography of need". Highest levels of need for Affordable Housing are identified in the Lothians, Perth and Kinross, Highland and Argyll and Bute but reference is also made to East Dunbartonshire as having "sizable shortages". It is acknowledged however that "in some cases it may be possible for these to be offset by surpluses elsewhere in the local housing market area" as "some areas have an overall surplus of Affordable Housing". Turning to transport issues the paper confirms that in 2006 69% of commuter journeys were made by car and the vast majority of freight continues to be moved by road. The current status of energy generation, waste management and roll-out of broadband communication are also explored.
- 4.4 The paper reviews anticipated drivers for change over the next 25 years and makes reference to the Government Economic Strategy (published November 2007) which sets strategic objectives for the country to become:-
- Wealthier and fairer
 - Greener and more sustainable
 - Safer and stronger communities
 - Smarter learning and shared achievements
 - Healthier.

Emphasis is put on the importance of creating stimulating environments and high quality places with strong and positive identities which are cosmopolitan, well connected and diverse. A significant part of the paper is taken up with a consideration of sustainable development and the implications of climate change. Although Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions fell by more than 15% between 1990 and 2005 transport emissions rose by 11% making this a key area for action. Since 1961 average rainfall in North and West Scotland has increased by almost 60% in the winter months together with an increase in the frequency of storms and increased risk of flooding. Turning to a consideration of current and future populations, it is anticipated that the national population will rise slightly over the next 25 years but that more importantly the number of people over 75 is projected to increase by 81%.

More locally the population of East Dunbartonshire is projected to fall by 11%. Although nationally the number of households is anticipated to continue to increase (by 13% over this period, representing 14,800 additional households per year, household size is projected to fall from the current average of 2.22 to under 2 by 2024.

The report confirms however that “household projections do not identify the number of households that are prevented from forming through the absence of opportunity to do so. They are therefore likely to underestimate the number of households that could form over a given period”. Particular mention is made of the importance of the Planning System in ensuring that the supply of land for housing development is adequate to meet projected needs and that new residential development is of a high standard and sustainable quality. Making links between concerns about the immediate and long-term requirement to reduce emissions from transportation, the paper emphasises “the promotion of compact settlements, mixed use development, functional walking and cycling networks and efficient public transport systems” as playing an important part in “reducing the need for car based commuting”. (It should be noted that these aspirations should be reflected in the Council’s Local Transport Strategy and Local Plan policies). The Government has set a target for delivering 50% of electrical energy from renewable sources by 2020. Increased emphasis will therefore be put on development which facilitates energy from the sun, biomass, waste, ground and air pumps and the bi-products of electricity generation and industrial processes, to meet the heat requirements which make up half of national energy demand. Similarly with waste management the Government has set a clear aspiration to deliver “a Zero Waste Scotland”.

4.5 The paper sets out the Government’s vision for Scotland in 2030 by:-

- Growing the economy, to match the UK wide and European small countries rates, together with associated population growth.
- Moving towards an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050.
- Creating stronger, healthier and safer communities and particularly regenerating areas such as the Clyde Corridor, Clyde Waterfront and Clyde Gateway.
- Delivering a National Development Strategy through a package of planning reforms (including Strategic Development Plans for the City Regions, restructuring the Enterprise Agencies and Visit Scotland, recognising that our cities are hubs for the wider regional economies and developing extensive green networks connecting inner urban areas with surrounding rural environments). Strong support is given to the City of Glasgow in its role as host of the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The delivery of at least 35,000 new houses per year by 2015 is also reinforced with the proviso that these should be “of the right type and in the right places”, achieved through high quality strategic planning and “a much stronger emphasis on Local Authorities working together at a regional level. In order to further strengthen forecasts of future affordability at the Sub-Scotland level the Government will commission an Economic Housing Market Model. In delivering housing needs however emphasis is placed on “making best use of Brownfield Land and existing infrastructure and minimising the need for commuting” although it is noted that “in some situations the creation of an entirely new, stand alone settlement may be the best option”.

- The improved facilitation of nationally important investment particularly in major transport, energy and infrastructure, will in part be delivered by the identification of these developments as “national” which, under the terms of the 2006 Planning Act, may be called for determination by Ministers. National developments will be those which:-
 - Make a significant contribution to Scotland’s sustainable economic development
 - Strengthen Scotland’s links with the rest of the world
 - Deliver strategic improvements in internal connectivity
 - Make a significant contribution to the achievement of climate change, renewable energy or waste management targets
 - Form part of a National Infrastructure Investment Programme
 - Raise strategic issues of more than regional importance (for example by impacting on more than one city region).

Nine specific projects are identified as falling into these categories including Glasgow Airport enhancement, Glasgow Strategic Drainage Scheme and the 2014 Commonwealth Games facilities.

- 4.6 A series of spatial perspectives are also given for the regions of Scotland and in the Central Belt mention is made of the importance of the regeneration of the Clyde Waterfront, Clyde Gateway and improved internal connectivity together with major opportunities to expand the Strategic Green Network.
- 4.7 The framework document concludes with a programme focussed on “making it happen”. This proposes developing agendas for coordinated action by the Clyde Corridor, 2014 Commonwealth Games facilities, delivering the Glasgow Strategic Drainage Plan and Clyde Waterfront. Local Authorities are also invited to put forward proposals for the creation of sustainable new communities (which, for larger sites are well connected by public transport or for smaller sites can access facilities by walking or cycling) with care taken to avoid flood plains, prime agricultural land or natural heritage resources and fit in with the landscape character of the area. Proposals are required to demonstrate partnership with the development industry and discussion with local communities.

5.0 ISSUES RAISED FOR EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE AND SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Further clarification of the planning priority to be given to key areas of development in Scotland is welcomed. It is particularly noted that sustainable economic growth, action to tackle climate change and investment in major infrastructure now form nationally important considerations.
- 5.2 The significant fall in employment figures for East Dunbartonshire is concerning. This may strengthen the argument to retain as many well located business development opportunities as possible so that every effort can be made to enhance the area’s local employment basis.
- 5.3 The linkage between meeting the nation’s housing needs and delivering economic competitiveness is also welcomed. East Dunbartonshire is identified as having a sizeable level of unmet need for Affordable Housing. The clear advice is that in some cases this mismatch can be offset by surpluses elsewhere in the local housing market area (i.e. adjoining Local Authority areas). This is a helpful contribution to the current debate.

- 5.4 Advice that East Dunbartonshire’s population is anticipated to fall (because of reducing household sizes) is of concern but may indicate that a key approach to meeting housing need locally might be to direct new housing development towards provision of smaller units.
- 5.5 Commitment to the important role played by cities within the wider city regions is welcomed and in particular the emphasis place on regenerating major locations within the Clyde Valley Corridor of growth, from which East Dunbartonshire benefits.
- 5.6 The proposed development of an Economic Housing Market Model to inform the forecasting of future affordability at a Scotland level is welcomed.
- 5.7 The Council does not however support the creation of new “sustainable communities” within already congested areas such as the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Greenbelt.
- 5.8 Strong support for the development of infrastructure to facilitate the successful delivery of the 2014 Commonwealth Games is welcomed and the Council will be pleased to play a strong role in this.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 | Finance | None |
| 6.2 | Legal | None |
| 6.3 | Human Resources | None |
| 6.4 | Public Relations | None |