

Consultation on The National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2)

Argyll and Bute Council Response to Four Questions in the “Small Country Big Plans” Consultation Leaflet

How can the National Planning Framework contribute to sustainable economic growth? Should it be seeking to change the existing pattern of economic activity in Scotland?

The NPF2 emphasis for future sustainable economic growth in Scotland remains centred around the City Regions. While it is recognised that further sustainable growth here is essential for the future of Scotland’s economy this should not be at the expense of predominantly rural areas, such as Argyll and Bute, which contain enormous potential to positively contribute to Scotland’s economic growth. To allow this to happen however, sufficient resources are required to be given to address inadequate and dated infrastructure such as roads, ICT, public transport, rail connections, fixed links and ferries, airports, ports and public drainage etc.

NPF2 should therefore play a greater role in setting clear targets and integrating existing national and regional plans and strategies to ensure they can deliver the Scottish Government’s main aims of creating a wealthier, fairer, greener, safer, healthier and smarter Scotland.

NPF 2 should include a clear definition of what constitutes “sustainable economic growth” particularly in the rural context to inform the local decision making process.

What should the National Planning Framework say about sustainable development, environmental conservation and climate change?

NPF2 should clarify what sustainable development means in land use planning terms and prescribe actions that can be taken within the remit of spatial planning. It should highlight the government’s commitment to the principles of sustainable development and ensure that these are an integral component of planning at the national level.

What can the National Planning Framework do to help ensure that all of Scotland’s communities enjoy access to economic opportunity and high quality environments?

NPF2 needs to better acknowledge the essential role played by small towns, such as we have here in Argyll and Bute, in delivering economic and social opportunities for a significant percentage of Scotland’s population. Additional resources need to be made available to key agencies to ensure that essential infrastructure is in place to ensure the future success of these towns and to allow them to provide high quality environments for people to live, work and visit.

The NPF2 document also needs to better recognise the contribution of Scotland’s unique island communities in terms of boosting Scotland’s image, culture and economy. A good example could be the whisky industry on Islay which makes a considerable contribution to our export industry and is currently expanding. Further success could be achieved if additional resources were provided to ensure these communities long term sustainability e.g. the expansion of RET or National Park status.

NPF2 also needs to strengthen the role of good, sustainable design in creating communities where people wish to stay and raise families. The finalised version of the NPF2 also needs to clarify how it will directly influence the spending priorities of the various key agencies and bodies that will implement the development strategy during the life of this plan.

How can the National Planning Framework help to maintain and enhance Scotland’s external and internal connectivity in a sustainable way?

Good internal and external connectivity are essential components of a successful Scottish economy. In predominantly rural areas such as Argyll and Bute transport networks are critically important to our future success. The NPF2 needs to better support the strategic priorities for investment in both the HITRANS and SPT Regional Transport Strategies. In particular, the NPF2 needs to better

acknowledge the urgent need to upgrade the Western Strategic Corridor, A82 Loch Lomond to Oban (A85) and Fort William Trunk Road in order to improve road capacity, journey reliability and safety.

<p>Scotland Today</p> <p>Sets out the context for the Framework with a profile and appraisal of Scotland, divided into subject headings.</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>The Place</p> <p>This chapter is generally too wordy and descriptive for such a strategic and supposedly forward looking document. While Argyll and Bute has been included in the Northern Highlands and Islands zone it is barely mentioned. It is therefore open to interpret from this that the Scottish Government believe that Argyll and Bute has very little strategic significance.</p>
<p>Scotland 2030</p> <p>Highlights the strategic spatial vision for Scotland, under Government's main strategic aims of A Growing Economy, A Greener Scotland, Stronger, Healthier And Safer Communities</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>A Growing Economy</p> <p>The commitment by the Government to ensure that economic growth benefits the whole of society and reduces regional disparities is welcomed. This will not be achieved by a drip down effect from successful city regions. There also needs to be a target orientated economic strategy for rural areas that helps realise their enormous potential to provide sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>There is a need for the NPF2 to better address the spatial implications of the forthcoming UK marine Act and likely Scottish Marine Act including the interface with the development of marine spatial planning and the expansion of integrated coastal zone management.</p>

<p>Drivers of Change</p> <p>Identifies the key challenges facing Scotland over the next 25 years and stresses the need for flexibility to deal with the unknown.</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>This chapter places great emphasis on the need to increase sustainable economic growth. While Argyll and Bute supports this concept there is a need for the NPF2 to define what is actually meant by this term particularly in the context of a predominantly rural authority.</p> <p>NPF 2 recognises the implications for our aging population and calls for the planning system to ensure that essential facilities and services be accessed locally. There is a lack of detail however on how this could actually be delivered given the continued loss of vital rural services such as post offices and ongoing pressure to further centralise public services.</p> <p>The NPF identifies in Map 8 that there is expected to be an increase of between 10 and 20% of new households in Argyll and Bute but there is nothing in the document to suggest where the necessary investment will come from to provide sufficient infrastructure to allow these increases to be realised, particularly in the remoter rural areas where need is often greater.</p>
---	---

<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Establishes the main priorities for the development of strategic infrastructure across Scotland, covering the main themes of Transport, Energy and Waste Management</p>	<p>Comments</p> <p>Argyll and Bute has not been identified as having any national infrastructure projects apart from a sub-station upgrade at Sloy as part of the reinforcement of the national grid. The Council believes that the proposal to develop the Hunterston to Carradale sub-sea cable should be included as part of the transmission system reinforcements. Interestingly, the sub-sea cable for Kintyre is mentioned in paragraph 273 of NPF2.</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>While it is welcomed that the document acknowledges that the car is still the dominant form of transport in Scotland,</p>
---	---

particularly in rural areas, there is no mention of the poor condition of the existing national Trunk Road network and the urgent need to upgrade both the A 82 and A 83, Argyll and Bute's principal road connections to the Central Belt, to improve journey times, road capacity and safety. It should also be acknowledged in the document of the importance of the A82 and A83, A85 in connecting our remotest rural communities including the Argyll Islands the Highlands and indeed the Western Isles. **Maps 15** and **16** of the NPF2 should therefore be amended to reflect the Trunk road system linking Campbeltown and Oban, Fort William and Inverness.

Campbeltown should also be included as an international gateway to aid its case for the reinstatement of the Ballycastle ferry link thereby helping to increase Scotland's international interconnectivity. Campbeltown should also be identified as a Port on **Map 5** (Transport System).

The inclusion of Oban as an important regional transport hub and interchange is welcomed but the NPF2 should include Oban's airport on **Map 5**. Similarly, Coll and Colonsay's small airports that have been subject to significant investment need to be included as small airports.

Spatial Perspectives	Comments
<p>Deals with the main issues and priorities for each major region of Scotland.</p>	<p>Argyll and Bute has been included within the Highlands and Islands section but little specific reference has been made to it.</p> <p>Greater emphasis could be made here on Argyll and Bute's internationally renowned marine environment and its considerable potential for renewable energy and increased tourism opportunities.</p> <p>The future growth of new technologies associated with the marine environment also needs to be mentioned with specific attention drawn to the continued success of the Dunstaffnage marine lab.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute should also be recognised as a "principal heartland of Scotland's gaelic culture" as well as the Western Isles.</p> <p>The Kintyre Way should also be included in paragraph 281.</p>