



**ASDA Stores Ltd 220**

**Response to the National Planning Framework 2 –  
NPF2 Consultation Draft**

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## **Introduction**

These comments have been submitted by ASDA Stores Limited who welcomes the opportunity to comment upon the National Planning Framework 2 – NPF2 Consultation Draft.

We operate over 350 retail outlets across the UK providing communities with high quality goods and services at an affordable price. We employ over 160,000 colleagues across the UK.

We have over 40 stores and two distribution centres across Scotland employing over 18,000 colleagues. ASDA is a major national employer.

The majority of our stores are located in town centres, district centres or at edge of centre locations. Our ongoing development programme is helping to revitalise cities and towns throughout Scotland. Our stores play an integral role in the communities they serve – creating new jobs and stimulating the economy.

As a major user of the planning system ASDA welcomes the publication of the updated Framework and the opportunity to comment on the spatial strategy for Scotland.

We note the Scottish Government's commitment to the planning and delivery of nationally important infrastructure projects in Scotland, and wish to make the following points in response to particular aspects of the NPF. We have referenced these in relation to page numbers of the document. We hope these comments will be of assistance to the Scottish Government.

***Paragraph 78 – “The primary purpose of the Scottish Government is to increase sustainable economic growth.”***

**ASDA’s response:**

We support the principle of sustainable economic growth, providing this interprets sustainability in environmental and social, as well as economic, terms. There is a challenge for Scotland to protect the environment whilst supporting community regeneration and promoting continuing economic growth. It is encouraging that the Scottish Government recognises that economic growth can be achieved alongside sustainability.

The Scottish Government should recognise the importance that the retail sector plays in delivering sustainable economic growth in Scotland. Retailers such as ASDA deliver long-term physical and social regeneration to communities through our new store development programme.

The Scottish Government should encourage employment of local people, enhance local competitiveness and performance. A clear priority should be given to making more jobs accessible to deprived communities. In deprived areas more local and accessible jobs need to be provided.

An example of the role retail can play in promoting regeneration and economic growth in deprived communities can be demonstrated by our Ardrossan store in North Ayrshire. Prior to opening the new ASDA store, we worked with Jobcentre Plus, local colleges, community employment initiatives and Careers Scotland to provide employment opportunities for local people. We created 175 new jobs and recruited 47% of the workforce (81 colleagues) from the long term unemployed, lone parents and older workers. Our overall investment of £11 million has helped to regenerate the town.

National and local economic development strategies and practices need to better link those who are economically excluded to job opportunities, linking labour supply to demand, helping to deliver sustainable communities in Scotland.

**Paragraph 150 – “The main elements of the spatial strategy to 2030 are to:**

- **support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of Scotland;**
- **promote development which helps to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint and facilitates adaptation to climate change;**
- **support the development of Scotland's cities as key drivers of the economy;**
- **support sustainable growth in the rural economy;**
- **conserve and enhance Scotland's distinctive natural and cultural heritage;**
- **expand opportunities for communities and businesses by promoting environmental quality and good connectivity;**
- **enable disadvantaged communities to benefit from growth and access opportunities;**
- **strengthen links with the rest of the world;**
- **promote more sustainable patterns of transport and land use;**
- **realise the potential of Scotland's renewable energy resources and facilitate the generation of power and heat from clean, low carbon sources;**
- **encourage a sufficient supply of homes that are affordable in places where people want to live; and**
- **facilitate the achievement of waste management targets.”**

**ASDA’s response:**

We support these aims which support the concept of true sustainable economic growth. It will be important for all the building blocks referred to in the individual bullet points to be achieved in this regard – not just some of them – as it will be these components together that will deliver sustainability. Public funding to help early delivery of key national infrastructure projects will, of course, be essential.

**Paragraph 188 onwards – “The competitiveness of places depends on adequate investment in infrastructure.”**

**ASDA’s response:**

We would agree with this statement and confirm our view that the timely delivery of major infrastructure will be vital to support the Scottish economy in the coming years. This is particularly the case with transport infrastructure on which the country depends for connectivity both in strategic and local terms. Continuing financial support by the Scottish Government for infrastructure projects should be a priority and will help to ensure timely delivery and keep the economy healthy.

***Paragraph 197 onwards – “Economic success will depend on good connections with the rest of the United Kingdom and global markets.”***

**ASDA’s response:**

This external focus is welcome. We would suggest that this underlines the role of cities as economic drivers, acting as a focus for incoming movement of people and finance. Continuing development of transport links with places outside of Scotland is important. However, within this commitment there is a need to consider carefully and rise to the challenge of factoring in sustainability, development of local markets and supply chains, as well as seeking new or improved ways of achieving the most effective external links, focusing on reduced emissions and energy efficiencies.

***Paragraph 250 onwards – Central Belt regeneration priorities.***

**ASDA’s response:**

Collaboration between Edinburgh and Glasgow will be necessary going forward to underpin a healthy economy. The cities in the Central Belt are the real drivers of Scotland’s economy and collaboration will ensure maximisation of investment. However, we applaud the balance of projects across the Central Belt: it will be important for a balance to be maintained at the implementation stage, to ensure that the cities keep pace with each other. For this reason, however, we would suggest that the NPF might provide a clearer platform for determining investment priorities in city infrastructure and regeneration which are not individually of national importance.

***Paragraph 264 onwards – the East Coast Strategy***

**ASDA’s response:**

We consider this strategy to be significant. Better infrastructure will add to the proven strength and growth potential of this corridor.

***Paragraph 299 – Key elements***

**ASDA's response:**

We support the key elements that will be addressed in the action programme.

In particular, ASDA is committed to contributing to the delivery of sustainable communities and is keen to continue to work in partnership with local authorities and local communities in the areas where we operate and those we are looking to invest in to achieve this. By working in partnership with the community, local government and other agencies our stores can bring jobs, investment, regeneration and prosperity to local communities.

ASDA is committed to sustainable development and reducing the amount of electricity and fuel it consumes. These savings can then be used to deliver the best value products and services to our customers and make sure sustainable living is affordable for all.

We have committed to reducing the energy requirements for our existing stores and distribution centres by 20% by 2012, based on a 2005 store model. In terms of our new store development programme, we will reduce new store energy requirements by 30% by 2010. The new ASDA store in Ardrossan which opened in September 2007 to date is showing an energy saving 15.2%. The ASDA Girvan store has achieved a 17% energy saving against a typical store built in 2005.

In addition, ASDA has committed to building a wind turbine to power our depot in Falkirk (there are plans for six win turbines across the UK by 2012, which will reduce our carbon emissions by over 150,000 tonnes over the next ten years.)

ASDA also recognises the need to invest in water and drainage infrastructure to support economic growth and regeneration. It is vital that this infrastructure is in place to support future developments. Development must not be slowed down by the need for additional infrastructure.