National Planning Framework 3

Monitoring Report
October 2019

Contents

1. Introduction

Scotland's National Planning Framework sets out a spatial strategy to guide future development and land use over the next 20 to 30 years. National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3)[i], our current strategy, was published in 2014, following extensive public engagement and full scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament. It aims to make Scotland:

- **a successful, sustainable place** "We have a growing low carbon economy which provides opportunities that are more fairly distributed between, and within, all our communities. We live in high quality, vibrant and sustainable places with enough, good quality homes. Our living environments foster better health and we have reduced spatial inequalities in wellbeing. There is a fair distribution of opportunities in cities, towns and rural areas, reflecting the diversity and strengths of our unique people and places."

- **a low carbon place** "We have seized the opportunities arising from our ambition to be a world leader in low carbon energy generation, both onshore and offshore. Our built environment is more energy efficient and produces less waste and we have largely decarbonised our travel."

- **natural, resilient place** "Natural and cultural assets are respected, they are improving in condition and represent a sustainable economic, environmental and social resource for the nation. Our environment and infrastructure have become more resilient to the impacts of climate change."

- **a connected place** "The whole country has access to high-speed fixed and mobile digital networks. We make better use of our existing infrastructure, and have improved internal and international transport links to facilitate our ambition for growth and our commitment to an inclusive society."

To deliver these outcomes, the spatial strategy aims to build on and enhance the unique assets of Scotland's city-regions, rural areas, coast and islands. The approach seeks to narrow disparities in well-being and opportunity and reduce regional inequality. It also reflects the need to respect and enhance the quality of environment, place and life which makes Scotland a special place.

Evidence base

The National Planning Framework 3 is a long-term strategy which includes aspirational proposals as well as investment-ready projects. Progress towards delivery of its various actions and developments has varied over the five years since its adoption. Some of the actions have been completed, while some infrastructure projects have not yet come forward but remain consistent with our policy aims. Other priorities have shifted and new challenges have emerged.

Since 2014, we have maintained an online Action Programme for National Planning Framework 3[ii]. Focusing on the strategy's 4 key themes, 30 key actions and 14 national developments, it has been regularly updated to reflect progress towards delivery. This report uses the Action Programme information to summarise progress towards delivering the outcomes identified in the National Planning Framework 3. In addition, broader social, economic and environmental information and policy help to explain the changing context over the last five years. National outcomes and national spatial planning indicators[iii] have been referred to where appropriate. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) monitoring information has also helped to inform the content of this report. The information provided in this report was largely gathered in 2018 and through the winter of 2018-2019.

2. A Successful, Sustainable Place

"We will create high quality, diverse and sustainable places that promote well-being and attract investment."

The first theme of the National Planning Framework 3 focuses on economic and social development and associated infrastructure.

The spatial strategy recognises that Scotland's network of cities will be a focus for development and sets out key priorities for each of the seven city regions. It underlines the importance of continuing development and investment across rural areas, envisaging vibrant rural communities together with distinctive and high quality towns acting as hubs for homes, transport connections and services. It also seeks to ensure that coastal and island communities benefit from new investment.

A successful, sustainable place

National Developments

Two national developments aim to help deliver this part of the strategy – Ravenscraig in North Lanarkshire and Dundee Waterfront.

Since 2014, the redevelopment of Dundee Waterfront has continued to progress at pace. The award-winning masterplanned development includes new and refurbished infrastructure and buildings, together with a complete reconfiguration of the central waterfront area. Creating a new high quality civic centre and involving many local residents, this is providing significant opportunities for business and cultural development, including in the completion of the V&A Dundee Museum of Design, the opening of a new railway station and hotel, and construction currently underway on other commercial buildings.

At Ravenscraig, 600 new homes have been completed and planning permission has been granted for a further 322, on which construction work has begun. A 40 bed hotel opened in 2018, as well as a pub/restaurant. Access has also been improved with the completion of a road dualling project. Owner Ravenscraig Limited has been granted outline planning permission for a revised site-wide masterplan, which is hoped to help unlock further phases of development over the coming years.
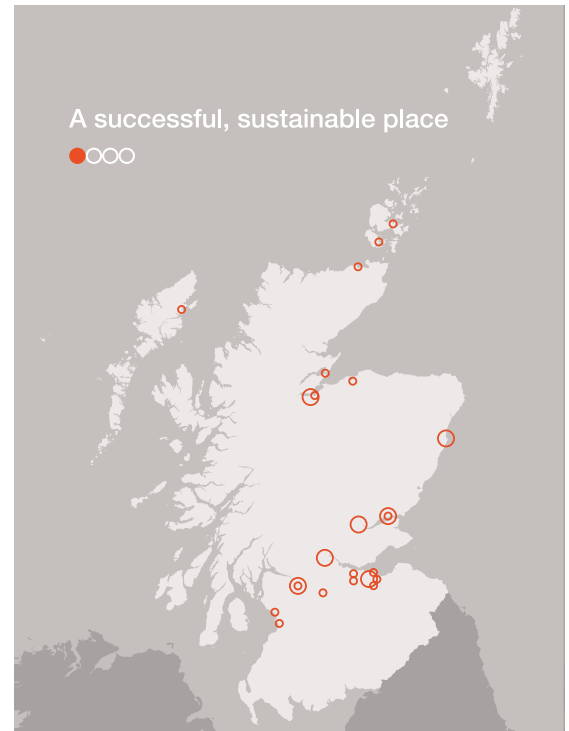
National Planning Framework 3 Actions

1. "We will work with planning authorities to maintain an up-to-date, easily accessible national protocol for Enterprise Areas."

The protocol for enterprise areas is in place. In the Review of Enterprise Areas in Scotland[iv], published by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in 2016, the consensus among stakeholders was that financial incentives were less significant than other available incentives, such as Planning Protocol, in attracting inward investors to locate on an Enterprise Area site.

2. "The Scottish Cities Alliance and local authorities will take forward the priorities set out in the City Investment Plans."

City investment has progressed rapidly since National Planning Framework 3 was published. Perhaps most significantly, four city deals are now in place covering Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness and Highland, and Edinburgh and South East Scotland. Heads of terms agreements have also been signed for both Stirling and Clackmannanshire and the Tay Cities[v]. Economic development and supporting infrastructure are a key focus, with deals aiming to support investments with the potential to deliver transformational and inclusive growth.

3. "The Scottish Cities Alliance will bring the City Investment Plans together into a shared investment portfolio brochure, communicating a consistent investment message across the cities network."

Two versions of the Cities Alliance Pitch Book have been published, which provided investor information on development opportunities of scale in Scotland. This provided a portal for investors to access information about development projects in Scotland.

From October 2018 this work has been superseded by the Scotland is Now Capital Investment prospectus[vi]. This collaborative approach to capital investment led by Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise is aimed at attracting capital investment to investor ready projects of scale through a joined-up package of public sector support.

4. "As an early priority, we will examine current planning authority approaches to aligning planning and infrastructure investment to inform whether further advice on this is required."

Research on aligning planning and infrastructure was completed in 2015[vii] and subsequently recognised with a national Royal Town Planning Institute research award. The report set out a number of recommendations. Specifically in relation to spatial planning, the work recommended closer integration of planning with wider infrastructure investment programmes and a greater focus on achieving delivery through the development plan process.

The work highlighted the importance of the planning system as a means of co-ordinating the funding and delivery of infrastructure and identified the challenges around front funding. The limitations of the system in using Planning Obligations to resource infrastructure requirements were also identified.

This work subsequently informed the independent review of the planning system, which in turn proposed a renewed emphasis on an 'infrastructure first' approach to development. Further work has since been undertaken to establish the potential for an infrastructure levy in Scotland, and an enabling power now forms part of the Planning (Scotland) Act[viii]. In addition, we have established an Infrastructure Delivery Group, involving public and private infrastructure providers and focusing on strengthening the relationship between planning and infrastructure delivery. Work to inform the work of the group and wider planning reform, continues to be progressed with the support of the Scottish Futures Trust.

5. "We will continue to implement and embed the regeneration outcomes as articulated in our Regeneration Strategy. As a priority, we will implement the Town Centre Action Plan, and take forward a series of demonstration projects including a programme of town centre charrettes."

We are promoting and supporting the regeneration of Scotland's towns and town centres, including small towns in rural areas. Through our Town Centre Action Plan[ix], we are continuing to promote the Town Centre First Principle to ensure planning and investment support the regeneration and sustainability of towns and town centres. The principle is a call to central government, local authorities, communities and our institutions to put the health of town centres at the heart of decision-making processes. This drives public sector investment decisions, aligns policies, and targets available resources to prioritise town centre sites and encourage vibrancy and diversity.

We fund Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) to provide information, support and services which contribute to the vibrancy, vitality and viability of our town centres and neighbourhoods; and to support the development of partnerships including Business Improvement Districts.

There are a range of tools and resources to support how partners can understand, audit, plan and improve their town centres, including:

• Understanding Scottish Places (USP)[x] is a unique and dynamic online tool which shows for the first time how every town in Scotland with a population of 1,000 or more is interacting with its surrounding settlements and performing against a range of indicators and interdependency relationships.

• USP Your Town Audit[xi], an STP add-on to USP, is a six-day study which provides the standard benchmark for measuring the health of a Scottish town.

• Town Centre Toolkit[xii] features all the best ideas in sustainable streetscapes, design and planning guidance.

• Place Standard[xiii] is designed to support communities, and the public, private and third sectors, to work efficiently together, as well as provides a framework to assess the quality of a place.

In 2018-19 we delivered another round of the Making Places Initiative which has provided support for a further 20 community-led design projects across Scotland[xiv]. Additionally, the Making Places Initiative has also provided support to 21 communities as part of the Place Standard Conversations element of the fund. The Place Standard Conversations fund offers support to communities to initiate discussions around their local area and develop capacity by using the Place Standard tool. The fund is aimed at removing barriers to participation and helping in the delivery of events within disadvantaged communities. These types of events are an important way of empowering people and enabling participation. Making Places represents a broadening of the charrette mainstreaming programme to support communities at all stages of their thinking.

There will be a new ring-fenced £50 million Town Centre Fund for 2019-20 within the local authority capital settlement to drive local economic activity and to stimulate and support place-based economic improvements to town centres. The aim is to invest in inclusive growth which supports town centres to become more diverse and sustainable, creating footfall through local improvements and partnerships which encourage town centres to become more vibrant, creative, enterprising and accessible places for their communities. This will deliver against the themes of our Town Centre Action Plan including town centre living and supporting town centres to be vibrant, accessible and enterprising places, such as re-purposing buildings for retail, business, housing, social and community enterprise, services, leisure, and culture, tourism and heritage; and improving access and infrastructure.

We have worked with ten planning authorities on pilots to test approaches that could simplify planning in town centres and attract in people and investment. Case studies and 'How To' guides[xv] to share the learning from the demonstration pilots are now available on Scotland's Towns Partnership website. These include the Renfrew Town Centre Simplified Planning Zone, which has informed our proposals in the Planning Act.

6. "We will work with housing providers and the development sector to support housing development and encourage innovative approaches to affordable housing."

The last five years has continued to be a challenging time for house building in Scotland. House building rates fell in the years immediately following the economic crisis, although the most recent statistics show an increase of 4% to 18,391 completions in the year to end of March 2017[xvi]. The need to deliver more good quality homes was a key driver of the programme of planning reform and the appointment of an independent panel to review the system as a whole in 2015.

Supplying more homes has become a national strategic 'Social Infrastructure' priority, with the Affordable Housing Supply Programme[xvii] committing us to delivering at least 50,000 affordable homes by 2021. The More Homes Scotland[xviii] approach focuses on provision of affordable homes, delivering mid-market rent homes and supporting home ownership through the Open Market Shared Equity Scheme and the Help to Buy (Scotland) Scheme.

We have provided funding for the construction of new homes, in particular since 2016 with the 'Help to Buy (Scotland) Affordable New Build' and 'Help to Buy (Scotland) Smaller Developers' schemes. Financial support for the 'Open Market Shared Equity scheme' increased to over £80 million. In addition we have identified £3 billion between 2016 and 2021 for the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes. These concentrate on providing homes for purchase or part purchase, but proposals for expanding mid-market rental accommodation are also important.

Planning has a central role to play in housing delivery, this is a key theme of ongoing planning reform with the independent review of the planning system calling for national spatial planning to provide a clear steer on requirements for housing land across Scotland. This is a significant challenge for National Planning Framework 4 to address and work is ongoing to establish how this can be achieved.

The Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland[xix] has driven forward 34 actions in the housing market to 2020. A wide range of actions relate to the housing sector, with planning, for example, prioritising the supply of affordable housing, supporting self and custom build opportunities and ensuring sufficient land is provided to accommodate a range of housing types within development plans. Town centre strategies also have significant potential to contribute to new housing provision.

Infrastructure is also critical to the viability of housing proposals, and the delivery of housing can be supported and strengthened by ensuring there is also an emphasis on improving quality of place. Related challenges include tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency, particularly in rural areas which are off the gas grid. The Energy Efficient Scotland Programme[xx], launched in May 2018, aims to make Scotland's buildings warmer, greener and more efficient. It has two main objectives; removing poor energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through more energy efficient buildings and decarbonising our heat supply.

In our 2018-19 Programme for Government, we made a commitment to plan together with stakeholders for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there. We completed our first round of stakeholder engagement in 2018, which provided a comprehensive dialogue around the future of housing in Scotland and has helped shape a draft vision and principles for 2040, which we published in July 2019[xxi]. We will undertake a full public consultation on our Housing to 2040 approach and, in 2020, we will publish our final vision and route map to 2040.

7. "In anticipation of longer-term change, we wish to see planning authorities anticipate the likely need for new housing, infrastructure and services resulting from investment in coastal and rural areas through a joined-up approach to marine and terrestrial planning."

Development planning for island communities has progressed since the National Planning Framework 3 was published. A rural and islands housing fund has been launched, allocating £25 million to housing in rural areas and £5 million to the islands.

In 2017 the Orkney Islands Council was overall winner of the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning and the UK-wide Royal Town Planning Institute Awards for Planning Excellence[xxii] for its exemplary work in Stromness. Our simplified planning zone housing pilots include a project with Argyll and Bute Council, using a dual mainland and island approach to explore use of simplified planning zones as an upfront consenting approach to support delivery of rural housing and the potential it brings to sustain local services and businesses.

Wider commitments to empowering the islands led to the introduction of the Islands (Scotland) Bill[xxiii] to the Scottish Parliament in 2017 which received Royal Assent in July 2018. It includes a number of measures to ensure that there is a sustained focus across Government and public sector to meet the needs of island communities now and in the future. We are committed to supporting these communities and improving outcomes by creating the right environment for investment, empowerment and increasing sustainable economic growth.

8. "We will support the sustainable growth of the aquaculture sector, including through the continuing work of the Ministerial Group for Sustainable Aquaculture."

Significant opportunities for investment and growth of our communities in coastal and island locations arising from the aquaculture sector were recognised in the National Planning Framework 3.

This action is being progressed in forums that include the Farmed Fish Health Framework Working Group[xxiv] and the subgroups delivering Scotland's 10 Year Farmed Fish Health Framework[xxv].

An Aquaculture Industry Leadership Group was established in 2016 to regularly discuss opportunities for the sector and its sustainable long term growth. In 2017 the Scottish Government published a joint ministerial aquaculture policy statement reaffirming that an appropriate balance is struck between the sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry and regulating the potential environmental impacts.

Following an independent review of the consenting process for aquaculture (jointly commissioned by Marine Scotland and The Crown Estate), published in 2016, there is a longer-term recommendation to look at the potential for an alternative consenting regime.

An Interactions Working Group will examine and provide advice on the interactions between wild and farmed salmon, and as part of this, a Technical Working Group (Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Marine Scotland and other public sector bodies - in consultation with the Interactions Working Group) is tasked with developing a risk-based policy framework on managing the interactions between marine cage salmon farms, sea lice and wild salmon and trout. The Technical Working Group will consult on its proposals this year.

In 2015, we published Circular 1/2015 on the relationship between the land use planning system, marine planning and licensing, to assist with applications in the intertidal zone, where planning permission and marine licensing both have a role.

Further Changes Since 2014

Population

Scotland's population has increased by around 90,500 since 2014[xxvi] to 5,438,100 in 2018[xxvii]. This increase arose from positive net migration. The population remains concentrated in the central belt of Scotland. The population density of Scotland has been generally stable. In 2014, there were 69 people per square kilometre, and by 2018 this figure stood at 70. There is significant variation between parts of Scotland, with the Western Isles and Highlands estimated at less than 10 people per square kilometre, compared to around 3,600 in Glasgow in 2018. Increasing numbers of council areas are experiencing population decline, with nine council areas experiencing depopulation in the year to mid-2014 and fourteen areas in the year to mid-2018. The council areas experiencing depopulation are mainly rural and island areas, as well as areas in the west of Scotland.

Our population is projected to keep growing due to migration in the years up to 2041[xxviii] with the latest national population projections estimating an increase of 5% between 2016 and 2041, continued but slowing growth. Alternative projections published by National Records of Scotland[xxix] show that where European Union (EU) migration to Scotland falls to half of current levels, population growth would be 4% over the same period (2016 to 2041), and with no EU migration, population growth is 2%. These alternative possibilities are trend-based, but provide helpful illustrations of the possible effect on Scotland's population changes as a result of EU in-migration (See also the section on 'Rural Scotland').

Economy

Scotland's Economic Strategy[xxx] was published in 2015 setting out the ambition to create a more cohesive and resilient economy that improves the opportunities, life chances and wellbeing of every citizen in Scotland. It is based on two key pillars: increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality. The Strategy includes four priority areas: investment, innovation, internationalisation and inclusive growth. Building on the Strategy, the Economic Action Plan[xxxi] was launched in October 2018, and sets out the range of positive actions this Government is taking to deliver inclusive economic growth. Achieving inclusive growth in particular will require a reduction in disparities in economic performance between regions and local areas, ensuring that the benefits of increased prosperity are distributed fairly.

In May 2016 the First Minister announced an end-to-end review to ensure that public agencies are delivering sufficient enterprise and skills support for Scotland's young people, universities, colleges, training providers, businesses and workers. Phase 1 of the review identified 10 recommendations to establish a simpler, more flexible, coherent and cost-effective system of support. Phase 2 of the review commenced in November 2016, with nine projects taking forward these recommendations.

The Phase 2 report of the Enterprise and Skills Review[xxxii] formed an Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board to align and co-ordinate the activities of Scotland's enterprise and skills agencies, supported by bespoke analytical services. The Board will seek to maximise the impact of the collective investment that Scotland makes in enterprise and skills development, helping to create conditions that are conducive to delivering inclusive and sustainable growth. It published its Strategic Plan[xxxiii] in October 2018, setting out a series of actions and recommendations to drive greater productivity and inclusive growth through the enterprise and skills system in all parts of Scotland.

A new South of Scotland Economic Partnership has been created, focusing on inclusive growth and acting as a forerunner to a South of Scotland Enterprise body (to be operational from April 2020). The Scottish Government has committed to growth deals covering all of Scotland. The forthcoming Borderlands Growth Deal straddles Carlisle City, Cumbria, Northumberland, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders council areas.

Work is ongoing in the Ayrshires, Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Moray and the Scottish Islands to develop and refine growth deal proposals. In addition to this, Regional Economic Partnerships are forming across Scotland, bringing local authorities, the private sector, enterprise and skills agencies, education and the third sector together into partnerships which seek to align resources and priorities to advance inclusive economic growth.

The Scottish Government has committed to growth deals covering all of Scotland. Progress has been reported in the 'City Investment Plans' action update earlier in this report. City and regional growth deals are in place or in development across Scotland. Significant progress is being made towards Heads of Terms for the Ayrshires and the Borderlands Growth Deals[xxxiv]. Discussions continue for growth deals for Moray, Falkirk, Argyll and Bute and the Islands.

Growth deal investment has been a catalyst enabling a new network of Regional Economic Partnerships to form across Scotland. These partnerships, where local authorities collaborate with businesses, enterprise and skills agencies, academia and the third sector, are an opportunity to identify key areas for growth. Some Regional Economic Partnerships are already in place and formalised, building on the collaboration required in order to obtain and deliver growth deals.

In addition, the Scottish Government has committed to a range of actions in its response[xxxv] to the work of the expert advisory panel on the collaborative economy with a focus on platforms that deliver fair work and contribute to inclusive growth. The nature of retail and town centres is also changing, with potential impacts on development patterns. Evolving economic conditions suggest our long term spatial planning approach will need to be revisited.

Health and Wellbeing

In 2018 the Scottish Government and COSLA jointly published public health priorities for Scotland[xxxvi] as part of the wider reform of public health. One of the six priorities is about healthy places and communities with the planning system also influencing some of the other priorities.

Scotland's health, including mental health, is also a key policy driver of relevance to the success of our population and places, with new data having emerged since National Planning Framework 3 was published. The mental wellbeing of the population as a whole has remained relatively stable between 2009 and 2017[xxxvii] and remained closely linked with both age and area-based deprivation. The Scottish Health Survey (2017 edition)[xxxviii] provides important insights into trends over time, between places and in relation to demographic differences. Mental health is one of the priority areas for the public health reform programme[xxxix]. We want to create a Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing and where all people can thrive across their lifespan. Our guiding ambition for mental health is simple but, if realised, will change and save lives – that we must prevent and treat mental health problems with the same commitment, passion and drive as we do physical health problems.

The Scottish Health Survey shows that levels of physical activity vary geographically and socially, with fewer adults living in the most deprived areas meeting the guidelines on recommended level of physical activity (56% in the most deprived areas compared to 72% in the least deprived areas). The Mental Health Strategy[xl] supports actions that improve the physical health of people with mental health problems and that improve the mental health of people with physical health problems. Actions need to happen at population community levels, in primary care services, in specialist mental health services and in specialist acute services. There should be holistic services around the individual with the addressing of inequalities being built in.

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan[xli] set out 50 actions to tackle poverty, reduce inequality and build a fairer, more inclusive Scotland. Planning can facilitate the actions in many different ways including: supporting community involvement and empowerment; making provision for affordable housing; directing development and regeneration towards areas where there are concentrations of people with significant disadvantage, and supporting the delivery of a wider agenda for improved public health.

The Scottish Government's first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, Every Child, Every Chance, published in March 2018[xlii], set out a range of new actions to support families with children living in poverty, as well as ongoing activity to improve the lives of families living in disadvantaged communities. This strategic focus on tackling poverty is now supported by the 'Fairer Scotland Duty' set out in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, which requires public sector bodies to tackle social and economic disadvantage (poverty) in local areas when making key decisions. The Scottish Government has provided resource to the Improvement Service to offer support to public bodies covered by the Fairer Scotland Duty, to help share best practice and deliver training.

Community Empowerment

The way in which communities engage with the planning system has emerged as a significant theme which the Planning Act is seeking to address. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (2015)[xliii], by creating new rights for community bodies and new duties on public authorities, strengthens the voices of communities in decisions that matter to them, making it easier for local people to develop their own economies, wellbeing and environments. A review of local governance is also now underway, providing a further opportunity to support and develop local democracy.

The quality of our places has a central role to play in supporting inclusive growth, health and wellbeing. The Place Standard is an easy to use tool that can help anyone to evaluate the quality of a place and supports communities, public authorities and industry to work together to create places that deliver a high quality of life. The tool, which is a partnership between Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland, with support from Glasgow City Council, is helping to support the development of effective place-based working across Scotland. The 2018-19 Programme for Government commits to building on the success of the tool and expanding our support for community-led design and ensuring early involvement by communities in shaping development in their area.

Rural Scotland

EU Exit will bring new and significant challenges for different parts of Scotland. The Scottish Government's analysis shows that failing to remain in the European Single Market or to secure a free trade agreement with the EU will damage Scotland's economy, reducing GDP by between 2.7% and 8.5%, up to £12.7 billion in 2016 cash terms by 2030, compared to full EU membership[xliv].

The scale of this impact will depend on the final outcomes of ongoing negotiations. Loss of a consistent regulatory framework and freedom of movement of people will be a significant challenge for Scotland. The impact on our workforce is of particular concern given reliance of some of our key sectors on EU citizens to ensure competitiveness and offset the impact of a long term ageing population.

A new approach to spatial planning will provide an opportunity to consider how planning can address the impacts of EU Exit on the rural economy. The National Council of Rural Advisors published their interim report 'Potential Implications of Rural Scotland of the UK Leaving the EU'[xlv] in 2017. To address concerns about availability of labour force for key sectors, the report suggests a number of options for retaining a local workforce:

- Promote rural areas as centres of excellence for sectors not traditionally seen as rural, for example advanced manufacturing.

- Address digital connectivity concerns and promote remote working opportunities, for example through the provision of shared workspaces.

- In the Northern and Western Isles, North West Highlands, Dumfries and Galloway, and the former heavy industry and coalfield areas of the Central Belt, Fife, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire policy and delivery will replace structural fund arrangements, and as a result these areas will require a particular policy focus.

The 2018 report 'A new blueprint for Scotland's rural economy: Recommendations to Scottish Ministers'[xlvi] sets out five principles considered by the National Council of Rural Advisors fundamental to shaping a vibrant future and which underpin the recommendations made. The leading recommendation is:

- A vibrant, sustainable and inclusive rural economy can only be achieved by recognising its strategic importance – and effectively mainstreaming it within all policy and decision-making processes.

That would be supported by a published Rural Economy Framework aimed at a number of outcomes including; highly valued, flexible, adaptive and skilled people; to have improved and inclusive access to rural housing solutions; and to have robust infrastructure, with improved and inclusive access to services, mobility and connectivity.

Long term change adds a further dimension to the pressures arising from EU Exit. Recent work by the James Hutton Institute[xlvii] has highlighted demographic decline in the most sparsely populated rural areas, further underlining the significance of the challenge for rural Scotland and the need for a positive planning response.

3. A Low Carbon Place

"Our ambition is to achieve at least an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050."

The second theme of the National Planning Framework 3 focuses on a low carbon Scotland, in support of ambitious emissions reduction targets set under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. Scotland is making sustained progress towards its climate targets and is on track to meet the current interim 2020 target of a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions[xlviii].

Whilst this theme extends across the strategy as a whole, this part of the National Planning Framework 3 focuses on reducing emissions and economic opportunities arising from the energy sector.

The spatial strategy seeks to ensure that cities and their regions would be exemplars of low carbon living and a focus for essential energy investment. The National Planning Framework 3 recognises that rural communities could benefit from well planned renewable energy development. It also highlights the significant opportunities for coastal and island areas to attract innovation and investment.
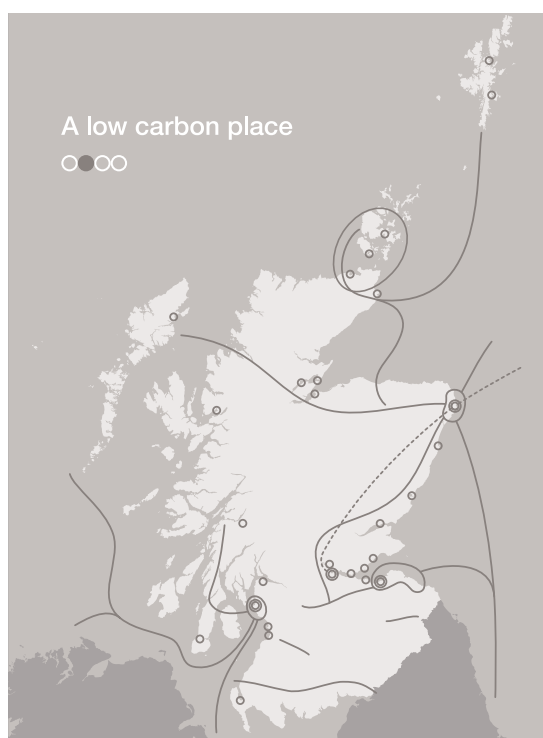
A low carbon place
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National developments

Three national developments aim to help deliver this part of the strategy – a carbon capture and storage network with thermal generation, a high voltage energy transmission network and pumped storage at Cruachan.

Baseload electricity generation in Scotland has changed significantly since 2014. Scotland no longer generates electricity from coal. Nuclear power stations at Hunterston and Torness continue to operate, with some power generation from gas at Peterhead. Cockenzie coal fired power station is now fully demolished and the site is now owned by East Lothian Council. Decommissioning is underway at Longannet coal fired power station, with the transition this brings having been supported by a Ministerial Task Force and steering group. The closure of Hunterston, currently expected to take place by 2023, poses questions for the operability and resilience of Scotland's electricity network – potentially heightening the need for new thermal capacity, supported by Carbon Capture and Storage.

Carbon Capture and Storage remains a policy objective in Scotland's Energy Strategy[xlix]. Grangemouth and Peterhead were part of a competition for funding to demonstrate carbon capture and storage technology at a commercial scale, but this was cancelled in 2015. There is interest in the application of carbon capture and utilisation technologies at Grangemouth, and a small demonstrator plant is currently at feasibility stage at St Fergus near Peterhead, as highlighted in the Energy Strategy, with an operational facility expected to be available before 2030 with full market access around 2040.

Further to Grangemouth clean coal power station, after extensive technical and commercial review, and issuance of the findings in a Feasibility Study Report[i] to Scottish and UK Government, it was determined that a much more feasible technology is a natural gas, post combustion capture, combined cycle plant. The Study concluded that compared to clean coal, public acceptance and interest from equity and debt providers deemed the gas plant as much more viable than clean coal.

Investment in Scotland's electricity and gas networks continues (Further details on transmission upgrades yet to start have been set out by the National Grid[ii]), including the following key developments including from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN):

- The Western Link, uses DC technology to reinforce the existing UK transmission system through a subsea cable and move electricity across the country in very large volumes. In December 2017 power started flowing through the link which when fully commissioned will deliver up to 2250MW power transfer capability from Scotland to England and Wales as well as an increased ability to import power into Scotland.

- The 220km Beauly-Denny transmission link was developed and delivered by SSEN and SPEN. The new line is an essential element in the development of the UK transmission system to facilitate renewable generation and to help Scotland realise its renewable energy potential, carbon reduction targets and security of supply. The line was successfully energised in November 2015 enabling almost 1500MW of additional renewable generation capacity to connect to the grid and contributing £100m to the Scottish economy through its development and construction. Work continues on the project, including the undergrounding of some 132KV circuits in the Stirling area, allowing 50 transmission towers to be removed. Other visual mitigation measures continue to minimise the impact of the new overhead line on local communities and residents.

- The Caithness-Moray transmission link, from Spittal to Blackhillock, was commissioned and energised in January 2019, contributing £330m to the Scottish economy during its development and construction. The £1bn transmission investment will allow for the transfer of 1200MW of new renewable generation in the north of Scotland in addition to strengthening security of supply for existing customers.

- Under the current price control, RIIO T1, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) has connected over 2,700MW of renewable generation to the network area in the North of Scotland since 2013; supporting the development of a significant proportion of renewable generation and further facilitating the transition to a low carbon economy. The majority of projects that have enabled this significant volume of connection fall within the scope of the National Planning Framework.

- SSEN has submitted final needs cases for remote island transmission reinforcements from Orkney (220MW), Shetland (600MW) and the Western Isles (600MW) to the mainland GB grid, subject to regulatory approval and developer commitment. Ofgem has approved the Orkney link, subject to a series of conditions being met by Orkney renewable developers. A final decision on the Shetland and Western Isles needs cases is expected to be made by Ofgem in 2019.

- SSEN is proposing a 400kV reinforcement of the existing Overhead Line network between Peterhead, Blackhillock and Kintore to assist with transferring the increased volume of renewable electricity being generated in the North East of Scotland and to accommodate interconnection from Norway. These works are expected to be completed in 2023.

- Working with SPEN, SSEN is currently preparing an Initial Needs Case for the 275kV East Coast Reinforcement project on the existing circuit from Kintore, Aberdeenshire to Kincardine, Fife and Tealing, Angus to Longannet, Fife, followed by an uprating to 400kV operation of a number of the existing circuits between Kintore and Kincardine. The Initial Needs Case is expected to be submitted to Ofgem in 2019 for delivery between 2023 and 2026.

- The East Coast HVDC Project, being developed by SPEN, SSEN and National Grid, will see two HVDC Links with capacities of approximately 2GW established between Scotland and England. One of these will be between Peterhead Drax in Yorkshire expected to complete in 2029, and one between Torness and Hawthorn Pit substation in County Durham expected to complete in 2027.

- The SPEN South West Scotland project has reinforced the Electricity Transmission system in the South West of Scotland including a new overhead line and substation at Blackhill. Further network reinforcement options, including more extensive overhead lines have been replaced by the development of the Dumfries and Galloway Integrated Network Management scheme which uses smart grid technology to connect more renewable generation in the region to the existing transmission network[lii]. Developed in stages as consisting of a number of new sub stations, overhead lines and underground cable the project has been energised in sections since 2016. Work will continue to energise the remaining sections of the project through to 2020.

- The Kendoon to Tongland reinforcement project will replace around 44km of 132kv overhead line, not changed for 80 years. This will secure local electricity supplies and provide some increase in transmission capacity to connect more renewable generation. This is due for completion after 2023.

- Feasibility work continues on the expansion of the 400kv network through the central belt. SPEN are undertaking early pre-delivery works on the proposed upgrade and reinforcement of circuits between Denny and the South of Scotland.

- The current regulated price control period for Electricity Transmission and Gas Transmission and Gas Distribution will end in 2021, and will be followed by new price controls SP Energy Networks SSEN networks are currently developing their business plans and will submit their final plan to Ofgem at the end of 2019. The current Electricity Distribution price control will end in 2023.

Feasibility work continues for the expansion of Cruachan pumped storage hydro, and an application has been submitted to expand the output of the consented Coire Glas pumped storage project, both projects having been designated as a European Project of Common Interest (PCI).

National Planning Framework 3 Actions

9. "We will continue to take action to help generate the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's gross annual electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020, with an interim target of 50% by 2015."

Renewable energy provides a key means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as significant economic opportunities. Scotland met its interim target for 50% of gross annual electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2014 and this increased to 70.1% in 2017 – a record year. The Energy Strategy, published in December 2017, set a new target of the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to come from renewable sources by 2030.

Planning continues to provide a regulatory framework for decision making, and new targets will be a significant challenge for the planning system in the coming years. Whilst heat emerged as a new priority in the National Planning Framework 3, in the future a more ambitious approach will be needed to support the targets for renewable heat to grow so that 35% of heat for homes will be from low carbon technologies and 70% of heat and cooling for non-domestic buildings will be from low carbon heat technologies by 2032. These figures are from the Climate Change Plan, which will be updated after the Climate Change Bill receives royal assent and, which includes tighter greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets than previously.

These targets mean that renewable generation capacity will continue to grow over the coming decade, bringing renewed opportunities and challenges for future national spatial planning. The Energy Strategy set out two illustrative scenarios, showing how low carbon electricity and/or hydrogen could be used to meet future energy demand, in a manner that is consistent with Scotland's ambitious long term climate change targets.

10. "We will apply building standards to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new buildings."

Work to improve the energy efficiency of Scotland's buildings continues. A review of Scottish Building Standards is underway and will examine the case for further efficiencies in new buildings and in existing buildings where new construction work is proposed. The planning system has a role to play alongside this, for example by managing the impact these requirements could have on the form and character of the built environment.

The Scottish Government has designated energy efficiency as a National Infrastructure priority and Energy Efficient Scotland, a 20 year programme, will make Scotland's existing buildings warmer, green and more efficient. The National Planning Framework 4 will be an opportunity to guide the planning system to support delivery of this goal, noting that energy efficiency measures should only be applied to historic buildings where appropriate.

11. "We will work with local authorities to build national and local authority heat maps into development plans."

Scottish Planning Policy[liii] states that local development plans should use heat mapping to show where developments with a high heat demand can be located close to sources of heat supply. Plans should also identify where heat networks, heat storage and energy centres currently exist or would be appropriate. This has led to a wide range of approaches to district heating across local areas. Some are at the early stage of identifying opportunities and supporting development of district heating. Others have mapped areas of opportunity and developed supportive policies. Some have gone further by developing district heating strategies, identifying priority projects, and defining a delivery programme.

All areas now have access to a national heat map, allowing the preparation of local heat maps to inform the local development plan for the area. In February 2018, we consulted on the introduction of a statutory duty on local authorities to develop Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES). The proposal, which is still under consideration, is that LHEES would designate zones for energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation to phase area-based delivery programmes for energy efficiency and identify the most appropriate heat decarbonisation options for specific areas. Zoning would be indicative and would not prevent other forms of heating from being used, but would help local authorities to communicate their strategic approach to energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation. The identified zones could be a relevant consideration for development planning and decisions and we will consider scope for further alignment in a future review of policy.

12. "We will build on progress to date to deliver our target of 500MW of community and locally-owned renewable energy and promote greater benefits from renewable energy generation."

Scotland met its 500MW target for community and locally owned energy generation from renewable sources in 2015, five years early. Our Energy Strategy maintains our commitment to community energy and included new targets of 1GW of community and locally owned energy by 2020 and 2GW by 2030. In addition, it states that by 2020, at least half of newly consented renewable energy projects will have an element of shared ownership. Progress towards our target as at end June 2018 is 697MW.

We encourage commercial developers to implement the Scottish Government 'Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy Developments'[liv] and 'Good Practice Principles for Shared Ownership of Onshore Renewable Energy Developments'[lv]. These were updated in 2018 and consulted on before being published in their final form in May 2019.

Our current Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) contract, has shared ownership as a priority.

13. "Working with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, we will implement the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan with planning enabling development across the locations it identifies."

The scale of activity around the sites identified in the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan at the time the National Planning Framework 3 was published has yet to materialise and depends in large part on the rate of roll-out of marine renewable technologies. However, ports and harbours will play a vital role in building the projects that help to maximise our offshore renewable resource. The Scottish Energy Ports Capability Directory[lvi] provides up-to-date information on those ports active in the marine energy industry.

Work has been undertaken to ensure terrestrial and marine planning processes are aligned, to enable the necessary development to take place. For example, The National Marine Plan[lvii], published in 2015, highlights the importance of this alignment and the requirement for marine planning to be consistent with Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework 3. Regional marine plans are now being developed in manner consistent with the priorities set out in National Planning Framework 3 and the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan. Further, a new sectoral marine plan is being developed for offshore wind energy, to ensure that the spatial strategy is in place to enable the successful development of the offshore wind sector.

Since 2014, improvements have been made to many of the harbours and ports identified within the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan, to ensure that these facilities are able to take advantages of the opportunities afforded by the growth of the renewable energy sector.

For example, substantial improvements have been made at Kishorn port in Wester Ross, with Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) investing nearly £160,000 of the total £450,000 refurbishment costs. Works have been undertaken to provide onshore support facilities for the offshore energy sector, with the dry dock facility being reinstated in early 2017, after 25 years of being dormant. The dry dock facility is one of the largest such facilities in western Europe and, as a direct result of this investment, Kishorn port has been successful in securing contracts for the supply of concrete substructures for offshore windfarms, as well as other oil and gas contracts.

Work has also been undertaken at Nigg Energy Park within the Cromarty Firth, with planning permission and marine licenses being granted to allow the provision of deep water access and other necessary supporting facilities. As a result of these works, Nigg Energy Park has been successful in securing a contract, with support from HIE, for the assembly of turbines during the construction of the £2.6 billion Beatrice Offshore Windfarm. Wick has now been selected as the operations and maintenance port for the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm, resulting in further major investment in port facilities in the Cromarty Firth region.

Scottish Enterprise and HIE published the Decommissioning Action Plan[lviii] in 2016 and in 2017 the Scottish Government announced the launch of the £5 million Decommissioning Challenge Fund, to support Scottish businesses to take advantage of opportunities associated with decommissioning activity, both nationally and globally. Funding has been awarded to numerous National Renewables Infrastructure Plan ports, including Ardersier, Kishorn, Dundee, Methil and Hunterston. The funding awarded for Ardersier will be used to conduct feasibility studies for quayside extension and upgrade works, which would enable the port to take advantage of these emerging opportunities.

14. "We will take forward a study to explore the potential role, technology options, and impacts on the energy system of an increase in energy storage capacity."

Energy storage continues to have significant potential to support a flexible energy system and maintain security of supply in Scotland. Research published since 2014[lix] shows that greatest benefit could be achieved from a whole-system network approach which supports intermittent renewable energy generation with energy storage to balance daily and seasonal energy supply and demand for both electricity and heat. As highlighted in our Energy Strategy, the importance of energy storage is anticipated to increase with the projected electrification of heat and transport. The National Planning Framework 4 is expected to explore this and other emerging technologies to provide a longer term spatial strategy that facilitates innovation and investment.

15. "The Highland Council, and Dumfries and Galloway Council will continue to work with partners and communities to develop planning frameworks associated with the decommissioning of nuclear power stations at Dounreay and Chapelcross."

Planning frameworks for Chapelcross and Dounreay nuclear power sites are now in place with decommissioning continuing at both sites.

16. "We will finalise the National Marine Plan, including our plans for offshore wind, wave and tidal energy, in 2014 and commence development of a strategy for the marine grid."

Scotland's National Marine Plan was published in 2015. It set out, for the first time, a policy framework for planning and decision making in the marine environment.

Draft Sectoral Marine Plans for Offshore Wind, Wave and Tidal energy in Scottish Waters were published in 2013. They contained areas for potential commercial scale offshore wind and marine renewable energy in Scotland. These areas were included in the National Marine Plan.

The continued development of technology, such as floating wind, offers scope to develop in deeper water and contribute to offshore wind energy supply. Accordingly, a new Sectoral Plan for Offshore Wind is being prepared, with the final plan expected to be published in 2020. We will work on a grid cost and capacity study that will help inform the new Sectoral Plan for Offshore Wind.

The first review of the National Marine Plan was published in 2018[lx], in accordance with statutory requirements. The review considered implementation of the marine plan across public authorities, its effectiveness and its relevance to emerging marine activity and to a changing political and legal environment.

Scottish Ministers have considered the review report and decided not to replace the National Marine Plan at this early stage of implementation and period of change.

There is a focus on addressing issues raised in the review, specifically implementation of the Plan and consideration of suggestions made to improve its future effectiveness.

The links between marine and terrestrial planning have continued to develop since the National Planning Framework 3 was published, and it is expected that the policy framework provided by the National Marine Plan and its review, will be used to guide the development of the National Planning Framework 4.

17. "We will support a co-ordinated approach to planning for energy-related and other key development in the five areas of co-ordinated action: Peterhead, Cockenzie, Grangemouth, Hunterston, and the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters. We believe that these locations have a nationally-significant role to play in delivering our spatial strategy."

In terms of these key areas, progress has been made as follows:

- The pilot **Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters** Marine Spatial Plan received ministerial approval in 2016. This award winning plan now provides the planning policy framework to support sustainable decision making in the region. The plan will also inform the development of the statutory Regional Marine Plans in this area.

- **Peterhead** is located at the northern end of the Energetica corridor, a lifestyle and leisure project promoting the north-east coast as a quality location for the energy industry.

- In relation to **Grangemouth**, a working group chaired by Falkirk Council is well established, bringing together business and industry in the Grangemouth area with local and national government officials to identify progress and overcome challenges. Since the National Planning Framework 3 was published, work has progressed on a flood defence scheme to address flood risk around Grangemouth and work is also progressing on the Grangemouth Investment Zone bid.

- A masterplan for the re-development of the **Cockenzie** power station site has been published. Scottish Ministers approved Planning Permission in Principle for an onshore substation and connection to the Inch Cape wind farm in February 2019.

- **Hunterston** remains a strategically important site, with its potential currently being explored as part of local development planning in North Ayrshire and a recent consultation by Peel Ports Group on a masterplan for the site.

Further changes since 2014

Ongoing Low Carbon Transition

In May 2018, the Scottish Government introduced a new Climate Change Bill[lxi] with increased target ambition in response to the UN Paris Agreement. Following receipt of independent advice from the UK Committee on Climate Change in May 2019, the Scottish Government acted immediately to amend the Bill and set a target for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Bill, which was agreed by the Scottish Parliament in September 2019, also updates the 2020 target to at least 56% reduction and sets new interim targets of 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% reduction by 2040. The planning system will need to continue to provide the framework in which decisions can support transformative change needed to deliver statutory emissions reduction targets under climate change legislation.

The Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan[lxii] and Energy Strategy set out a strategic framework for the transition to a low carbon Scotland. They identify the key areas where planning will need to take an active approach to tackling climate change in a manner which delivers sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

In addition, the Scottish Government's Onshore Wind Policy Statement[lxiii], published alongside the Energy Strategy, shows continued support to the Onshore Wind sector, which makes a valuable contribution to the Renewable targets set out by the Scottish Government, underlining the continued importance of this established, low cost resource.

In March 2019, the Scottish Government published a Vision for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks to 2030[lxiv]. This highlights the need for new electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure in order to deliver principles, priorities and targets of the energy strategy and ensure wider Scottish Government policies, such as those around decarbonisation of transport, can be met. The Vision highlights the need for new network infrastructure to be developed in a way that is consistent with the National Planning Framework.

We will seek to define the role of community energy as we transition to a more decentralised approach to energy, one where local energy systems are at the centre. Our Energy Strategy made a commitment to produce a local energy system policy statement and work on this is underway, and will include a formal consultation.

Alongside the energy sector, work continues to develop Scotland's circular economy. Levels of waste vary significantly from year to year as a result of changes in construction and demolition wastes. Latest (2016) information[lxv] shows an overall decrease in waste generation from 2015 of 4.7% to 10.79 million tonnes. Household, paper and cardboard waste is decreasing but figures show an increase in animal and mixed food waste (due to the increasing success of separate food waste collections). Waste sent for energy recovery in 2015 decreased from 2014 by 2.9%. Household waste that was landfilled decreased from 45.6% in 2016 to 45.0% in 2017. 19 local authorities improved their recycling rates from 2016 to 2017 and 11 local authorities recycled more than 55% of their household waste in 2017. The percentage of household waste that was recycled has increased from 45% in 2016 to 45.6% in 2017, so that for the first time we recycled more than we sent to landfill.

If we are to achieve our ambition for a world-leading, resource efficient economy, then our understanding of how materials move through our economy and where the opportunities are to keep materials in use for as long as possible need to continue to improve. In 2017, we published a new Waste Data Strategy for Scotland[lxvi], setting out the actions we will take to improve the collection and reporting of data, using digital solutions and innovation. This will form a basis for new systems and indicators to measure and understand Scotland's progress towards a more circular economy.

4. A Natural, Resilient Place

"We will respect, enhance and make responsible use of our natural and cultural assets."

The third theme of the National Planning Framework 3 focuses on the natural and built environment. It sets out an agenda for planning that reflects our environmental strengths and the distinctive qualities of all of our places.

The strategy promotes a landscape scale approach to land use change, including water management and green infrastructure for communities.

The National Planning Framework 3 emphasises that quality of life and resilience in city regions will be supported by green infrastructure. It recognises that rural areas have an important role to play in providing important ecosystem services. It also seeks to ensure that coastal and island areas capitalise on their world-class environment.

A natural, resilient place

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National developments

Three national developments aim to help deliver this part of the strategy - the Central Scotland Green Network, Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Plan and the National Cycling and Walking Network.

The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) continues to change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and transforming its landscapes. It is helping shape new development within the context of green infrastructure, enhancing the relationship between development and nature as part of placemaking. In line with the priorities set out in the National Planning Framework 3, the CSGN is seeking to also maximise its impact by focusing actions on areas with disadvantaged communities and where there is vacant and derelict land.

Working across local authorities, the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership has delivered green roofs, sustainable drainage systems, flood protection, invested £100 million in the Shieldhall strategic waste water tunnel and continues to raise awareness of the importance of long term infrastructure investment.

The National Walking and Cycling Network is a 6,400km network of strategic long distance paths and trails extending throughout Scotland, comprising Scotland's Great Trails, the National Cycle Network, and Scottish Canal's towpaths. Work has progressed on around 37 National Walking and Cycling Network (NWCN) projects. Development of the network is progressing well and since 2015 lead partners have spent £16.6M in creating and improving around 441km of strategic routes, with a highlight being the upgrading of the entire lowland canal towpath network. Based on evidence from recent monitoring[lxvii], it is clear that the NWCN in Scotland is encouraging people to increase their level of physical activity, enabling active travel, supporting local economies and connecting millions of people with nature.
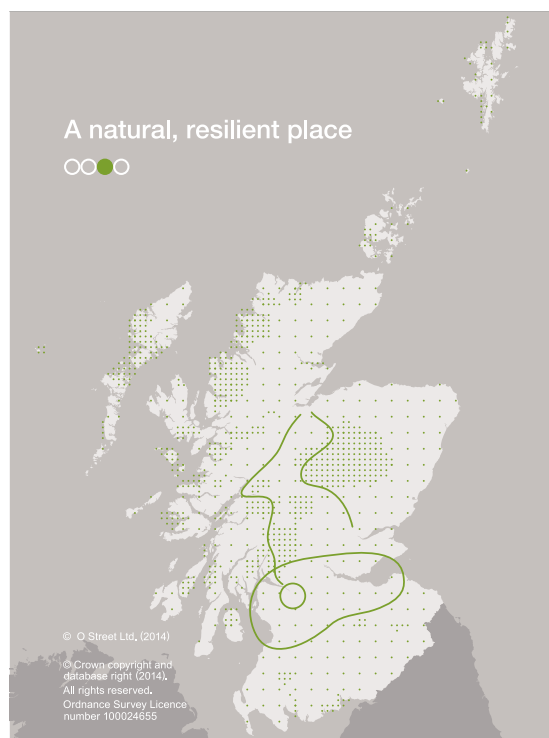
National Planning Framework 3 Actions

18. "We will take forward the provisions of the Cycling Action Plan and the National Walking Strategy."

The second Cycling Action Plan for Scotland Progress Report[lxviii] was published in 2016, showing that the vision of 10% of everyday journeys by bike by 2020 is unlikely to be met without rapid behaviour and resource change. The third Cycling Action Plan for Scotland[lxix] was published in 2017.

The Government is committed to building an active nation, and to achieve this has doubled the already record level of investment in walking and cycling from £39.2 million in 2017-18 to £80 million per year in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This will allow us to invest in ambitious capital infrastructure projects and increase successful behaviour change and education programmes. In 2015, a competition was run for road space reallocation, encouraging new consideration of the priority given to users in the investment and design of our streets.

The National Walking Strategy Action Plan[lxx] and Walking Infographic[lxxi] were launched by Paths for All in 2016. The action plan was updated in 2019 and will continue to act as a key point of reference to organisations such as public bodies, local councils and charities who have committed to its delivery. The benefits of active travel for helping create friendlier environments, good physical and mental health, quality of life and promoting equality are now widely recognised and further work is underway to achieve a step-change in travel patterns.

19. "We will implement the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, including completing the suite of protected places and improving their connectivity through a national ecological network centred on these sites."

Scotland's Biodiversity – a Routemap to 2020[lxxii] was published in 2015. Its first progress report a year later showed around 80% of actions on track[lxxiii]. In 2017, Scotland's Biodiversity: Progress to 2020 Aichi Targets Interim Report 2017 identified seven goals on track, twelve showing progress but needing further action and one goal moving away from the target[lxxiv].

Scotland has over 380 Natura 2000 sites and over 1,450 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. As of March 2018, 79.7% of natural features on protected sites were considered to be in favourable condition, a very slight reduction from 2016 but an overall increase of 3.7% since 2014[lxxv].

In 2016, the numbers of breeding birds were around 9% lower than in 2014 but in 2015 were around 2% higher than in 2014[lxxvi]. The fluctuation in numbers is affected by a variety of factors including habitat, farm management and climate change and demonstrates their vulnerability to change.

20. "We will help planning authorities to take a more co-ordinated approach to planning for environmental and habitat improvements for the Forth Estuary."

A guide to help developers and regulators meet the requirements of Habitats Regulations Appraisal on the Firth of Forth was published by Scottish Natural Heritage in 2016[lxxvii]. Local initiatives are supporting conservation and enhancement, for example the Inner Forth Futurescapes project[lxxviii], overseen by RSPB, involves wetland improvement for wildlife and flood risk management in the area.

21. "We will increase new woodland creation to an average of 10,000 hectares per year from 2015, and take action towards delivering the proposal in Low Carbon Scotland (RPP2) to increase the rate of peatland restoration to 22,000 hectares per year."

Woodland planting and peatland restoration have many environmental and cultural benefits. We have set targets for woodland creation and peatland restoration in the third Climate Change Plan, which covers the period 2018 to 2032 and supersedes the Report on Policies and Proposals 2. The ambitions in the Plan include:

•   By 2032, Scotland's woodland cover will increase from 18% to 21% of Scottish land area. The ambition is to increase the rate of woodland creation to 15,000 hectares per year by 2025; and

•   By 2020, 50,000 hectares of degraded peatland will have been restored, with another 250,000 hectares restored over the following ten years

A new grant scheme and streamlining of the grant application process have led to an increase in woodland creation activity, indicating that annual woodland creation targets will be met in the near future.

22. "SEPA will publish the second round of River Basin Management Plans in 2015. National and local flood risk management plans will be published in 2016."

The second round of River Basin Management Plans were published in 2015. They set a target for 87% of our rivers, lochs, coastal waters and groundwaters to be in 'good' condition by 2027. Around 80% of ground water bodies and half of rivers are in good condition[lxxix]. SEPA continues to manage the Water Environment Fund, currently around £4.5m per year. This aims to remove barriers to fish passage and restore urban rivers, creating associated social and economic benefits for communities.

There are 14 Local Plan Districts for flood risk management in Scotland. In 2015, Flood Risk Management Strategies[lxxx] for each Local Plan District were published. Local Flood Risk Management Plans[lxxxi], published in 2016, provide a local delivery plan for these strategies, together setting out actions to be undertaken between 2016 and 2021.

In 2015, we published research and mapping looking at the area that would be most disadvantaged by flooding[lxxxii], showing that climate change is likely to increase the frequency of flooding and exacerbate its impact, based on the first National Flood Risk Assessment.

In 2018, SEPA published Scotland's Second National Flood Risk Assessment[lxxxiii]. This gives us the clearest picture yet of flood risk in Scotland, and embeds climate change and a comprehensive range of social, environmental and economic impacts into a single assessment. We now understand that there are around 284,000 homes, businesses and services across Scotland at risk of flooding from rivers, surface water and the sea. Climate change is projected to increase the numbers at risk by an additional 110,000 homes, businesses and services, across all sources of flooding by 2080.

23. "We will take action based on the outcome from our consultation on Opencast Coal Restoration: Effective Regulation."

The collapse of Scottish Coal and the legacy of large abandoned surface coal mines was a significant concern at the time the National Planning Framework 3 was published. The report of the Opencast Coal Task Force 'Surface Coal Mine Restoration – Towards Better Regulation'[lxxxiv] was published in 2015. A programme of mineral related topic training, funded by the Scottish Government's Planning and Division and co-ordinated by the Improvement Service, has been taken forward. This was made available to all local authorities and the industry.

In 2015, a Coal Restoration Working Group was established and a Scottish Coal and Minerals Forum was created in 2016. New regulations for opencast mine monitoring fees came into force on 1st January 2018.

24. "Planning Authorities will support VisitScotland's Tourism Development Framework in their development plans."

In 2016, the Tourism Development Framework[lxxxv] was updated along with a list of projects relevant to its delivery with this regularly highlighted as a consideration for strategic and local development plans to take into account.

Tourism continues to make a significant contribution to the economy. In its first year the North Coast 500 route was reported to have drawn more than 29,000 additional visitors to the Highlands[lxxxvi], contributing some £9 million to the economy. However, in recent years additional pressure on remote and island communities arising from tourism have become a significant issue.

Whilst many of Scotland's leading attractions are in our cities, our world-class landscape continues to be a draw for visitors from the rest of the UK and overseas. Localised but significant issues have been reported in some areas as a result of higher than expected numbers of visitors, suggesting the need for careful planning and management of infrastructure in environmentally sensitive areas such as Orkney and Skye.

These are issues that the Scottish Government has also addressed through measures such as the establishment of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the setting up of the Short Term Lets Delivery Group to consider whether further measures are required in this area given the potential impact on communities.

25. "We will take forward the actions in the Climate Change Adaptation Programme."

Scotland's first five year Climate Change Adaptation Programme[lxxxvii] was published in 2014. Since then, there have been five annual progress reports setting out where there has been progress and two independent assessments by the Adaptation Committee of the Committee on Climate Change helping to identify next steps.

Many of the initiatives to date aimed at improving understanding and action on adaptation can be utilised by planners at national and local level. Examples include improved data on coastal change with Dynamic Coast[lxxxviii] - Scotland's National Coastal Change Assessment; emerging collaborative partnerships on climate change adaptation such as Climate Ready Clyde and Edinburgh Adapts; Flood Risk Management; public body reporting on climate change adaptation; and Historic Environment Scotland's climate change risk assessment.

New Climate Change Projections[lxxxix] (UKCP18) were launched by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in November 2018, updating the previous projections published in 2009. UKCP18 forecasted similar climate trends to the 2009 analysis, but with much greater local detail, and signalled that higher sea level rises are forecast, with implications particularly for coastal communities.

A further iteration of the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment was published in 2017, in so doing activating the statutory requirement to address the risks in preparing the next adaptation programme.

In 2019 the Scottish Government engaged with stakeholders across Scotland to understand their views, experiences and priorities for adapting to climate change, in order to develop a second climate change adaptation programme. The Scottish Government held digital engagement events, stakeholder engagement events and Climate Change Adaptation Climate Conversations across Scotland. A public consultation was held and a report on consultation responses was published in May 2019[xc]. The new programme was published in September 2019[xci].

The planning system has significant potential to support future climate change adaptation delivery. Climate change risk assessments are becoming better understood and climate change data is improving, collaborative partnerships approaches are emerging, and responses are required across all sectors. Planning policy and practice will need to continue to develop, by considering, for example, the weight to be given to climate change data in risk assessments for major developments in the face of uncertainty and addressing the needs of communities and businesses at risk of flooding. As we tackle matters such as domestic climate justice, there will be particular challenges in considering which reasonably fall within the remit and scope of planning.

Further Changes Since 2014

Place Quality

Almost all adults in Scotland (95%) rate their neighbourhood as a very or fairly good place to live[xcii]. Neighbourhood rating varies depending on area deprivation. Adults in less deprived areas are more likely to rate their neighbourhood as a very good place to live.

Quality of place, health and wellbeing are interlinked and the planning system has an important role in ensuring that future development is supported by high quality green infrastructure. Green space covers 54% of the land area of urban Scotland[xciii].

The 2017 Scottish Household Survey[xciv] found that most adults (65%) live within a five minute walk of their nearest green space, although this is down from 69% in 2014. More than a third of adults (37%) visited their nearest area of green space at least once a week, which has been around the same proportion since 2013, when comparable figures were first collected. Those living within 5 minutes' walk of green space are more likely to use it than those living 6-10 minutes' walk away. Most adults (74 per cent) were very or fairly satisfied with their nearest area of green space, a similar proportion to 2016.

Just over half of adults in the Scottish Household Survey (52%) visited the outdoors at least once a week in the last year, an increase from 48% in 2014. In the most deprived areas of Scotland, 41% of adults visit the outdoors at least once a week, compared to 63% of adults in the least deprived areas. Whilst only 6% of adults living in the least deprived areas had not made any visits to the outdoors in the last twelve months, this figure stood at 20% of adults living in the most deprived areas.

In 2017, Scotland had 11,649 hectares of derelict and urban vacant land, a decrease of 7% from 2016[xcv]. In this period, 229 hectares of new derelict and urban vacant land emerged, 27% of this was previously mineral sites. In the same year, 857 hectares were brought back into use, of which 23% is now in residential use.

Following a commitment in the Programme for Government and building on the successful example of the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, the new Edinburgh and Lothian drainage partnership is developing a strong partnership working approach to enable a growing, sustainable and resilient region by transforming how we think about and manage drainage and surface water.

Land Use Strategy

Scotland's Land Use Strategy[xcvi] highlights climate change and biodiversity as pressing concerns. The strategy aims to ensure land-based businesses work with nature to contribute to Scotland's prosperity, promotes responsible stewardship of natural resources, and aims to connect people with the land through enjoyment and influence in its use. It aims to bring back into productive use derelict and vacant land and seeks to ensure that outdoor recreation opportunities and accessible green space are available close to where people live.

The strategy is clear that decision making should take into account whether land is highly suitable for a primary use such as food production, water management or carbon storage. It recognises that all landscapes are important to identity and wellbeing, seeking positive and sympathetic change. The strategy has followed through to a number of projects, for example, work on a strategic vision for the uplands led by Scottish Natural Heritage[xcvii].

Land Reform

The Scottish Government's ongoing programme of land reform is empowering more people and communities to shape the future of the land, buildings and infrastructure of the places where they live and work, and in doing so, to shape their own futures. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016[xcviii] was a milestone in Scotland's land reform journey, followed in September 2017 by the publication of the Scottish Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement[xcix].

The Statement will help shape government policy on land in the years to come. Its principles support increased diversity of ownership and use of land, promote sustainable development and social justice, community engagement and transparency in relation to land and help to protect and enhance the environment. Greater collaboration and community engagement in decisions about land will help to ensure there is a strong and dynamic relationship between people and land.

Food

The relationship between land, food production and consumption and health is complex, and an important long term planning consideration. Scotland's Good Food Nation policy was published in 2014[c], setting out a vision of access to quality local food, supporting associated market opportunities and reducing dietary related diseases. A programme of measures report published in September 2018[ci] detailed the breadth of work being done across Government which contributes to our Good Food Nation ambitions.

In 2018 and early 2019 a consultation Good Food Nation proposals for legislation was undertaken[cii]. In 2017, a consultation on a new Diet and Obesity Strategy[ciii] included a commitment to exploring the relationship between the planning system and the food environment, in particular around schools. Research helping to fulfill this commitment was published in November 2018[civ]. 'A Healthier Future', Scotland's diet and healthy weight delivery plan was published in July 2018[cv].

The Scottish Government has been very clear that a wide range of actions are needed to make healthier choices easier wherever we eat. While Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework 3 do support the health and wellbeing of communities in Scotland through good placemaking principles, prioritising active travel, open spaces and providing room for allotments, they have not previously put a framework in place around controlling the food environment. The published research and further work in this area will help to identify actions for planning to improve the food environment for consideration in the National Planning Framework 4.

5. A Connected Place

"We will maintain and develop good internal and global connections."

The fourth theme of National Planning Framework 3 explores the need to achieve better physical and digital connections across Scotland and beyond. The spatial strategy aims to build on our gateways and existing infrastructure networks and complemented the Infrastructure Investment Plan and the Strategic Transport Projects Review, by reflecting prioritised and long term infrastructure investment in Scotland.

The National Planning Framework 3 aims to ensure cities are better connected, acting also as a gateway to the rest of the world. It recognises the need to make rural areas more accessible, and seeks to reduce the disadvantage of distance for coastal and island communities.

A connected place

Indicative

National Developments

Six national developments are designated under this theme - high speed rail, strategic airport enhancements, the Grangemouth Investment Zone, Freight on the Forth, Aberdeen Harbour and a Digital Fibre Network.

In 2016, the Scottish and UK Governments made a joint commitment to work together, alongside Network Rail and HS2 Ltd, to identify interventions that could be implemented between 2019 and 2029 to improve journey times, capacity, reliability and resilience on routes between central Scotland and London, with an ambition for a three hour journey time.

As announced by the First Minister in late 2017, Transport Scotland, working in partnership with the Department for Transport, commissioned an in-depth Engineering and Environmental Feasibility Study into two of the better performing options. In the east, the study found that it would be technically feasible to construct a new line between Newcastle and Edinburgh that would deliver a step change improvement in capacity and a sub 1 hour journey time. In the west, the study found that it would be technically feasible to construct a new route between either Abington or Carstairs and Glasgow that would deliver a step change improvement in capacity and a sub 1 hour journey time between Carlisle and Glasgow. One of the west options, in conjunction with the east option could also achieve a sub-two hour time between Glasgow and Newcastle and also reduce the journey time between Carlisle and Edinburgh.

The feasibility study also considered two new cross-border stations: one on a new high speed line at the Eurocentral Business Park and the other on the existing line near Livingston.

Since December 2018, the Edinburgh to Glasgow Improvement Programme has delivered a fastest 42 minute journey time between our two main cities using the new electric Hitachi trains which has also delivered a significant reduction in diesel emissions between both cities. The Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk High route was previously served by 6 car diesel trains and seating capacity has increased by 26% since the introduction of the new 7 car electric trains. This will rise to 44% more seats when 8 cars run on all peak time services. The redevelopment of Queen Street station continues and is scheduled to be completed by March 2020.
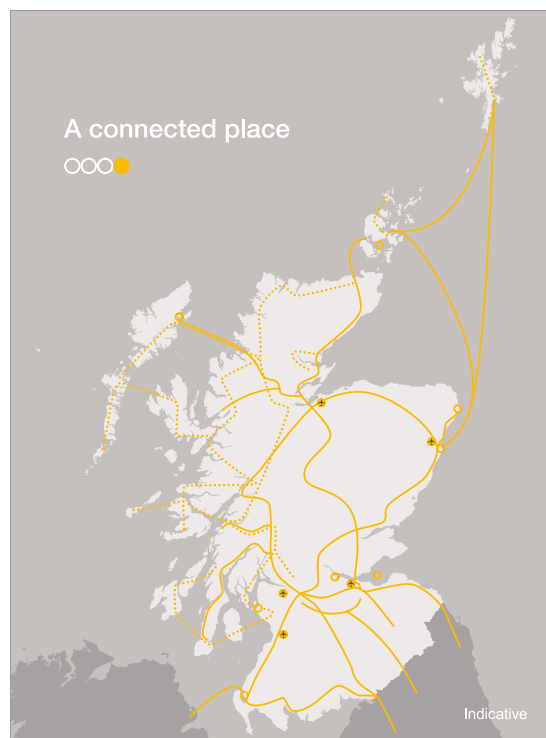
As recognised in the National Planning Framework 3, our airports and sea ports are vital global gateways.

• Facilities across Scotland's five main airports of Glasgow, Prestwick, Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh have improved through significant investment in terminal and access facilities for passengers, and the opening of new routes. Glasgow Airport alone has invested almost £100 million in facilities since 2014. There are a raft of infrastructure proposals for the improvement of Prestwick Airport and the aerospace engineering hub around it. Anchor businesses and significant employers include Spirit Aerosystems, BAE, GE Aviation, Ryanair, and Chevron. Central to funding the infrastructure are proposals in Ayrshire Growth Deal, which the Scottish Government committed £100m investment to in January 2019. Edinburgh airport has benefited from the opening of the 'Edinburgh Gateway' station. Infrastructure in the areas around Glasgow and Edinburgh airports forms part of City Deals announced for both areas, including as part of the Glasgow City Region Deal, the Airport Access Project progressing now and planned to commence operation in 2025. At Glasgow Airport Investment Area, significant progress is also being made with the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland and Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre announced as tenants, expected to be operational from 2021.

• At Nigg Bay, construction of the expansion of Aberdeen Harbour is underway with the north breakwater partially completed and dredging ongoing.

• On the Firth of Forth, environmental explorations and licensing activity have been undertaken. Following this activity, the assessment is that the economic environment does not currently support the level of investment required for development of container harbour facilities at Rosyth. This situation will continue to be monitored.

• Grangemouth continues to be an important multi-modal hub for freight handling. Motorway junction improvements accessing the port have been completed at the M9 Junction 6 via the Falkirk TIF, with further improvements planned to commence at Junction 5 in the near future. The Scottish Government, Falkirk Council and West Lothian Council are preparing for implementation of works on the A801 (Avon Gorge) to improve access between the M9 and M8. Works have taken place on the electrification of the rail freight line. Forth Ports has increased container freight capacity and the petrochemicals sector continues to invest in new development. This includes site clearance and investment in new chemicals production capacity by INEOS with upgrade of the KG Cracker and development of a new headquarters building. CalaChem have commenced provision of a new energy from waste plant to service its chemical campus.

National Planning Framework 3 Actions

26. "We will work with the Cities Alliance to progress the Smart Cities initiatives."

Since 2014, the Cities Alliance has published 'Smart Cities Scotland's Blueprint' (2016)[cvi] while the Scottish Government has published 'Realising Scotland's Full Potential in a Digital World: a digital strategy for Scotland' (2017)[cvii], identifying actions to support growth in the digital sector.

Phase 1 of the Alliance Smart City activity is almost complete, delivering a variety of smart services on water management, mobility, public safety, waste, energy, communities and infrastructure. The 8th City, Smart City Programme[cviii] has delivered fully operational open data platforms in the 7 Scottish cities which will allow them to make data more widely available for use in the development of new products and services. A Data Cluster Manager has been funded to aid the collaboration of the cities on data standards, analytics and community and capacity building.

Through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme (See Action 29), around 930,000 additional premises across Scotland have access to fibre broadband, with the majority of those able to access superfast broadband (speeds greater than 30 Mbps). We also exceeded our target of 95% fibre broadband coverage across Scotland by the end of 2017 largely thanks to the current programme's roll-out.

27. "We will deliver the strategic transport projects in the Infrastructure Investment Plan and work with the freight sector to identify priority developments for inclusion in NPF4."

The priorities for transport and digital infrastructure set out in our Infrastructure Investment Plan continue to be implemented. Our current plan was published in 2015, followed by annual progress reports.

Key projects, including the new Queensferry Crossing, the M8, M73, M74 Motorway Improvements Project, the Borders Railway and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/Balmedie to Tipperty have been opened since the National Planning Framework 3 was published.

Other strategic projects continue to progress, including A9 dualling Perth to Inverness, A96 dualling Inverness to Aberdeen and the Edinburgh – Glasgow Rail Improvement Programme, the Highland Mainline and Aberdeen to Inverness Rail, together with significant investment in digital infrastructure. Through commitments made in and alongside City and Regional Growth Deals, work is continuing to progress on road improvements in Inverness, the A90 at Laurencekirk, the A720 at Sherrifhall, and rail improvements on Aberdeen to central belt rail.

A sub-group of the Scottish Freight and Logistics Advisory Group was formed in 2015 to consider strategic freight infrastructure needs. The group identified seven priority projects with supporting information, and we will work closely with the industry to use their knowledge and experience to help inform the development of the National Transport Strategy, as well as the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

28. "We will continue to provide funding for the installation of domestic, workplace and en-route charging points, as set out in 'Switched On Scotland: A Roadmap to Widespread Adoption of Plug-in Vehicles'."

Permitted development rights have been introduced to support the need for a quality network of charging points for electric vehicles, and in 2015 a network of charging points was in place across Scotland. In 2017, the ChargePlace Scotland network extended to over 1400 public charging bays making it one of the most comprehensive networks in Europe.

For homes, Transport Scotland and Energy Saving Trust provide charge point grants, enabling the installation of 1381 units by 2017. As part of its wider review of permitted development rights, we are considering whether those for EV charging can be extended.

29. "We will work with industry to take forward the Step Change Programme to provide the capacity to deliver next generation broadband to 95% of premises by 2017-18, and a significant uplift in speeds for remaining areas."

The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB)[cix] programme exceeded its target of reaching 95% by the end of 2017. DSSB has connected around 930,000 premises - this is in addition to commercial broadband rollout by suppliers. DSSB deployment will continue across the whole of Scotland, throughout 2019.

Building on the success of the DSSB roll-out, our Reaching 100% programme[cx] will extend superfast broadband access to every home and business in Scotland.

30. "We will continue to progress the Scotland's Scenic Routes Initiative."

Complementing the National Long Distance Walking and Cycling Network, the 'Scotland's Scenic Routes' initiative[cxi] has delivered creative projects in eight locations across Scotland. These projects provide inspiring points of interest and opportunities to experience the landscape along key routes for visitors and those enjoying Scotland's landscapes and heritage.

Further changes since 2014

Infrastructure Planning

Wider changes to infrastructure planning and investment form a changing context for the National Planning Framework. The 2015 Infrastructure Investment Plan[cxii] set strategic priorities for infrastructure investment across Scotland. The plan is framed by four themes: tackling inequalities, supporting a low carbon economy, high quality public services, and supporting employment opportunity across Scotland.

In 2018, the Scottish Government announced a new National Infrastructure Mission commitment[cxiii] to increase annual infrastructure investment by 1% of 2017 Scottish Gross Domestic Product by the end of next Parliament; meaning annual investment in infrastructure will be around £1.56 billion higher by 2025 than in 2019-20. This is an ambitious programme of infrastructure investment for 2019-20 of over £5 billion, supporting jobs and the economy.

To support the National Infrastructure Mission, Scottish Ministers have established an Infrastructure Commission for Scotland to provide long-term strategic advice to the Scottish Government on national infrastructure priorities, based on evidence and learning from good practice and to align investment with long term inclusive economic growth and low carbon objectives. It will identify key strategic investments in Scotland to be made to boost economic growth and support public service. The Commission will report on infrastructure ambitions and priorities by the end of 2019.

In 2020, the Scottish Government will publish the next Infrastructure Investment Plan, which will build on the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations and take account of our National Infrastructure Mission. The Plan will cover the next Parliamentary term and will be prepared in tandem with our Capital Spending Review allowing us to align our stated priorities with the funding and finance to deliver them.

The National Transport Strategy is currently under review, with a consultation commenced in July 2019[cxiv], and its outcomes will form an important part of the context for National Planning Framework 4. The second Strategic Transport Projects Review will be shaped by the new strategy and fully aligned with the National Planning Framework 4 and 2020 Infrastructure Investment Plan, providing a clear route to prioritisation and delivery of future transport infrastructure investment. The approach will need to reflect new priorities including active travel and the transition away from fossil fuels as well as links with future development.

The continued transition to alternative fuels is supported by a new target to make Scotland free from harmful tailpipe emissions from land-based transport by 2050 and the roll-out of low emission zones to Scotland's cities. This includes a commitment to phase out the need to buy petrol and diesel vehicles by 2032.

Transport, Place and Quality of Life

The relationship between quality of place, connectivity and infrastructure continues to grow in recognition. Transport has an important role to play in shaping places and determining environmental quality. Journey time to access key services is a key indicator of connectivity. In Scotland, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)[cxv] shows concentrations of people experiencing deprivation in an area, the data includes analysis of accessibility considering access to basic services by driving, public transport and/or walking[cxvi]. Access to services and employment is a significant contributing factor to deprivation in parts of rural Scotland.

Since 2014, air quality has become a recognised priority given its impact on health, wellbeing and quality of place. Scotland's 38 declared air quality management areas are found in 14 Council areas[cxvii]. Most of the areas are declared because of road traffic emissions, with North Lanarkshire and Falkirk Councils also declaring one area as a result of industrial emissions. In 2016, air quality targets were exceeded for two types of pollutants, Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter (PM10).

Scotland's air quality strategy 'Cleaner Air for Scotland – The Road to a Healthier Future'[cxviii] sets out a series

of actions to deliver further air quality improvements across a range of policy areas, calling for national and local planning policies to take this into account. In November 2018, Scottish Ministers announced an independent review of Scotland's air quality strategy. The review will explore the progress and impact of Scotland's previous air quality strategy; identify and assess any new evidence and developments; make recommendations for future air quality policy; and outline actions needed to meet targets.

The Scottish Government has announced its intention to create Low Emissions Zones in Scotland's four biggest cities by 2020, with the first Low Emissions Zone commenced in Glasgow at the end of 2018. By 2023, the intention is to introduce Low Emission Zones to all other Air Quality Management Areas where this is supported by the National Low Emission Framework[cxix]. The regional level modelling framework supporting low emission zone delivery, has the potential to inform placemaking and planning application decisions. The National Planning Framework 4 will also provide an opportunity to ensure that spatial planning prioritises more sustainable and active travel choices to help achieve a step-change in both health and quality of place.

6. Looking ahead to National Planning Framework 4

The National Planning Framework is a long term strategy. There has been good progress in implementing National Planning Framework 3 since it was published in 2014. While some of the actions have been completed, others continue to progress. Some national developments have already been delivered, whilst for others the agenda has changed, and new challenges and opportunities have begun to emerge.

Planning Reform - a New Agenda for the National Planning Framework

Planning reform is opening up new opportunities for a stronger and more integrated approach to strategic development and infrastructure planning and delivery. The Planning (Scotland) Act, which received Royal Assent on 25 July 2019, underlines our commitment to strategic planning, including the National Planning Framework. It also sets out changes to strategic planning, including new, more flexible and collaborative working arrangements.

Now the Act is finalised, work will commence on preparing the National Planning Framework 4. Over the coming months we will continue to explore and develop a fresh approach to preparing the National Planning Framework 4 based on the principles of collaboration, transparency and inclusion. The National Planning Framework 4 will be developed in response to a very different context, with new policy priorities, changing economic and social circumstances, and an unprecedented opportunity to link planning with development delivery at both the national and regional scales. The National Planning Framework 3 was prepared alongside a review of the Scottish Planning Policy. Under the new legislative arrangements, Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework will be a single suite of policies in the future, rather than the two documents as at present.

The Place Standard could also help to shape engagement with people on the National Planning Framework 4. We are considering ways in which research carried out into scaling up the Place Standard can support regional and national decision-making that adopts a place-based approach. Our national performance indicators have recently been updated and the refreshed indicators will frame the discussion on the outcomes from the strategy. We will also explore how the context of the global climate emergency and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals can guide and inform the development of criteria for national developments and the wider spatial strategy.

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