

## National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy

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July 2014

### Context

A review of the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) began in 2012. The City of Edinburgh Council provided responses at the main consultation stages of the review and submitted written evidence to the Parliamentary Committees considering the NPF. The final documents were officially launched by the Scottish Government on 23 June 2014.

The NPF and SPP will shape long term economic development and local planning policy. The documents are closely aligned, sharing outcomes for a Scotland which is a successful, sustainable place, a low carbon place, a natural, resilient place and a more connected place.

### NPF

The NPF is a statutory document. It is the spatial expression of the Government's Economic Strategy and provides a vision of how Scotland should evolve over the next 20-30 years. Planning authorities are required to take the NPF into account in development plans and development management decisions.

The NPF establishes priorities for change to deliver the outcomes for Scotland. The diversity and distinctiveness of Scotland's cities is recognised. Edinburgh and the South East region is identified as a high growth area requiring a planned approach to ensure development needs are met. A more concerted effort to deliver a generous supply of housing land is called for. Infrastructure constraints are acknowledged and a requirement for cross-boundary transport infrastructure improvements is recognised. West Edinburgh is identified as a significant location for investment, with the airport, the National Showground and the International Business Gateway, requiring continued coordination and planning to achieve a successful business led city extension which fulfils its potential for international investment, new jobs and high quality of place. The Edinburgh Bioquarter is defined as a key location for life sciences.

14 national developments are identified to help deliver the strategy. Those impacting on the Edinburgh area include the Central Scotland Green Network, National Long Distance Cycling and Walking Network, High Speed Rail, Freight Handling Capacity on the Forth and Strategic Airport Enhancements. Edinburgh Airport and the surrounding area are included within Strategic Airport Enhancements. Specific classes of development are defined to support the key gateway functions of the airport including new National Showground facilities south of the A8.

Designation as a national development establishes the need for the development. When applications are submitted to the planning authority it is then the detail which is assessed, not the principle of the proposal.

An on-line Action Programme specifies how the strategy will be implemented, by whom and when. This identifies City of Edinburgh Council and others as implementation lead on a number of actions. The NPF must be reviewed every five years.

## Scottish Planning Policy

SPP sets out national planning policies which relate to the preparation of development plans, design of development and determination of planning applications. It is intended to promote consistency in the application of policy across Scotland and explain how the outcomes for Scotland defined in NPF3 and SPP can be delivered on the ground.

SPP is non-statutory. Planning authorities must have regard to SPP in preparing their development plan and it is a material consideration in planning decisions.

SPP contains principal policies on sustainability and placemaking. These are overarching policies which apply to all developments. Subject policies are provided related to the four outcomes.

The policy on sustainability introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development. The presumption does not change the primacy of the development plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Proposals that accord with up-to-date plans should be considered acceptable in principle. For proposals that do not accord with up-to-date plans, the primacy of the plan remains. Where plans are out-of-date, or do not contain relevant policies, then the presumption will be a significant material consideration. If a shortfall in the 5-year effective land supply emerges then the policies for the supply of housing land will not be considered up-to-date. The policy states that where a plan is under review it may be appropriate to consider whether granting planning permission would prejudice the emerging plan.

The policy on placemaking requires a design-led approach to be applied from national level to individual building level. Development plans are required to promote a sustainable pattern of development appropriate to the area and a high quality of design should be supported.

Although now aligned with NPF and rationalised, much of the subject policy is unchanged from the previous SPP. Some key changes:

- A generosity margin of 10-20% should be added to housing land requirement.
- Town centre first policy extended to all uses which attract significant numbers of people, including retail and commercial leisure, offices, community and cultural facilities.
- Guidance provided for health checks and town centre strategies.
- Encourages policies to prevent over provision of particular activities which would undermine the character and amenity of town centres or the well-being of communities where a town centre strategy has indicated an issue.

## More detailed information

The documents are available on the Scottish Government Website by following these links:

[National Planning Framework](#)

[Scottish Planning Policy](#)

## Contact

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