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Editorial

As we near the end of 2022 its perhaps worthwhile to reflect back on what has happened over what has been a busy and interesting year. It is good to see Convenor Andrew Trigger talk through some of his highlights in his comments on the opposite page so, to complement that, here are some of the achievements of RTPI Scotland in numbers:

- **35** – the number of organisations met on the year
- **12** – the number of events RTPI Scotland spoke at
- **130** – the number of people who attended the Scottish Young Planners' Annual Conference held in Perth
- **13** – the number of media channels RTPI Scotland featured in
- **45** – the number of events organised by RTPI Chapters, Young Planners' Network, International Group and RTPI Scotland office
- **1492** – the number of people who attended RTPI Scotland events in the year
- **7** - submissions to Scottish Parliament or MSPs
- **4** - editions of The Scottish Planner journal published
- **17** - policy responses submitted to Scottish Government or its agencies
- **18** – the number of committees, advisory or working groups RTPI Scotland has sat on
- **6** – the number of times RTPI Scotland appeared before Scottish Parliament committees

And this doesn't include the work undertaken to develop a business case for a planning apprenticeship scheme in Scotland, nor the start of the digital planning skills development programme we are working with Scottish Government to deliver.

All in all, it has been a productive year for all involved in planning in Scotland and we are proud to have worked with a range of organisations through this – you know who you are! This collaboration is so important in helping to highlight the value and contribution of planners and planning.

Given this can I wish all RTPI Scotland's members and friends all the best for the festive season and a very happy new year when it comes.

Craig McLaren
Co-Editor

Convenor's Comments: Planning's new future



Andrew Trigger MRTPI
Convenor
RTPI Scotland,
Associate with Justin
Lamb Associates

Andrew Trigger MRTPI, RTPI Scotland Convenor, Associate with Justin Lamb Associates, reflects on the past year for RTPI and the Scottish Planning Sector, and the changeover to our new 2023 Convenor.

Somehow, we have reached the end of 2022 and the final edition of the Scottish Planner for this year. It focusses on one of our nation's greatest resources – water. Not that I'm particularly qualified on the subject, but quite simply, we need it – lots of it – and we're lucky to have it in fairly generous supply even though we often begrudge it on a bank holiday. What is beyond doubt though is that we can no longer take it for granted as abstraction bans in both Fife and the Scottish Borders earlier this year demonstrated.

I'll let you enjoy the articles from those far better placed to offer some enlightened reading, but I'll leave you with some images on the matter from my recent travels in London (I normally have the blinkers on when it comes to planning stuff when off duty so to catch my eye was really quite something!). Very simply, on a safety hoarding surrounding a new housing development under construction, a local primary school has presented dozens of images of 'why water matters to us', which shows that the next generation are firmly switched on when it comes to environmental issues – we need to embrace and encourage our school kids on these things as we have several hundred planning jobs for them to fill!

It won't have escaped you that the newly revised draft National Planning Framework 4 has now landed. Understandably, firm focus has been placed on Scotland's role in addressing the climate emergency and the nature crisis and that should be rightly lauded. The concept of sustainable economic

growth also seems consigned to the history books (for now anyway), which in this post-Brexit, post-pandemic era in the midst of a recession feels like a missed opportunity for encouraging positive investment (not all development clashes with primary NPF4 objectives!). Anyway, NPF4 is here with stronger policy wording and a clear sense of direction offering a good start to reaffirming the primacy of the plan-led system and providing some much-sought certainty in the Scottish planning system, even if guidance on transitional arrangements would be appreciated too.

However, as we all know, NPF4 is only one component of the development plan and now it is over to our local authorities to bring forward their new Local Development Plans within the next 5 years. The preparation of the next LDPs will be undertaken under the new system and I really hope that engenders a spirit of co-operation, collaboration, and transparency as we look to develop best practice going forward (proposing minimum housing numbers + 1 as a way of exceeding targets isn't going to get us off to a good start!).

And so, the end is near – the publication of this edition represents my final act as Convenor of RTPI Scotland. It seems to have

flashed by but looking back we seem to have managed to cram a lot in with a number of highlights along the way. The highlights reel includes the SYPN conference in Perth (whilst the profession might be short on numbers, the quality and enthusiasm of those entering this mug's game is in rude health); the inaugural RTPI Scotland Awards for Planning Excellence (congratulations again to all our winners but a special mention for

“NPF4 is here with stronger policy wording and a clear sense of direction offering a good start to reaffirming the primacy of the plan-led system and providing some much-sought certainty in the Scottish planning system, even if guidance on transitional arrangements would be appreciated too.”

the Fraserburgh Conservation Area Renewal Scheme Townscape Heritage Project), the Sir Patrick Geddes Commemorative Lecture delivered by Susan Murray (I'm now regularly thinking about how to accommodate guising in placemaking!) and of course our annual conference that focussed on targeting net zero and helped to showcase Scotland's north-east. A big thank you to the RTPI Scotland team for their support and encouragement over the past year and I look forward to Kirsty Macari picking up the baton for 2023 (with a lot less flippant comments in brackets too). I wish you all a fantastic celebratory season ahead and a prosperous 2023. ■



Article: Revised Draft National Planning Framework 4

Robbie Calvert MRTPI, Policy, Practice and Research Officer at RTPI Scotland, outlines the recently published revised Draft NPF4 and comments on its continued development from RTPI's perspective.

On the 8th of November, World Town Planning Day, Scotland's Planning Minister Tom Arthur MSP presented the much-anticipated revised [draft National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#). Alongside the publication of revised draft was a range of impact assessments, an explanatory report and a first version of a Delivery Programme. This important milestone has been the culmination of over 3 years of work, which has included wide ranging engagement work and, of course, the effects of global pandemic in its preparation. The revised draft NPF4 is now to be considered by parliament. The Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee (LGPHC) are leading this parliamentary consideration process and have conducted two oral evidence sessions on the 22nd and 28th of November. RTPI Scotland presented [oral evidence](#) at the first committee session and have submitted [written evidence](#). Following on from these evidence sessions we expect the LGPHC to submit a report to the parliament. It should be noted that whilst there is to be a parliamentary debate on the revised draft LDP, no further amendments will be made to the plan, with it either being approved in the whole or rejected.

So, for those who haven't yet been

over the revised draft with a fine-tooth comb, what is different? The document has seen a lot of reworking, we counted 427 changes to the National Planning Policies section alone. Many of these changes were minor edits, aimed at improving the clarity and consistency, something we very much welcome. Whilst these edits were not significant in isolation, the usability of the document has been greatly improved. Having said that, the fundamental focus of the framework with primacy given the twin climate emergency and the nature crisis

“the fundamental focus of the framework with primacy given the twin climate emergency and the nature crisis remains, something that RTPI Scotland considerably supports. One policy that has had more substantive changes is relating to energy – with more permissive wording around their potential development in order to achieve net-zero target ambitions and improve energy security.



Robbie Calvert
MRTPI, Policy,
Practice and
Research Officer at
RTPI Scotland

remains, something that RTPI Scotland considerably supports. One policy that has had more substantive changes is relating to energy – with more permissive wording around their potential development in Wild Land Areas in order to achieve net-zero target ambitions and improve energy security.

A key point that RTPI Scotland has stressed since the very inception of the new NPF4 is the need to resource planning

“A key point that RTPI Scotland has stressed since the very inception of the new NPF4 is the need to resource planning service effectively to deliver on its commitments”

services effectively to deliver on its commitments. In our written evidence to the LGHPC, we raised some concerns with the conclusions of the Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA). The conclusion of the BRIA mainly draws focus to potential savings for planning authorities in the LDP preparation with the adoption of National Planning Policies. It is stated that where additional policy requirements are more significant, additional guidance and skills development will be undertaken, but makes no mention of the necessary provision of additional resource. In many cases, RTPI Scotland does not think the BRIA has fully considered the real-world costs of the revised NPF4 on planning authorities and has not been completed in a consistent manner. Although planning authorities will be affected by almost every policy change, a full evaluation of potential costing for them has not been consistently undertaken. Notwithstanding this, the BRIA has identified 14 areas of policy that may have a resourcing and skills impact on planning authorities, a number which we believe to be an underestimate. Given this, RTPI Scotland has reiterated our calls on Scottish Government, as made to the previous draft NPF4, for a comprehensive resource and skills strategy to be published as a part of the next iteration of the Delivery Programme.

Indeed, the scrutiny of the Delivery Programme - of which a draft version was not published alongside the previous draft NPF4 – has taken up a considerable amount of our time and resource here at RTPI Scotland. The Planning Minister, in his [ministerial statement](#), set out that the NPF4 Delivery Programme is the first iteration and will be an evolving document, updated as delivery progresses. In his [parliamentary address](#) he stressed that Scottish Government

would very much welcome comment and feedback from stakeholders as we take the plan forward. We expect the first review process of the Delivery Programme to commence in 6 months’ time. RTPI Scotland is disappointed that no capital investment programme has been published alongside the Framework, as has been done through the Irish National Development Plan¹. However, we do understand and support the intentions

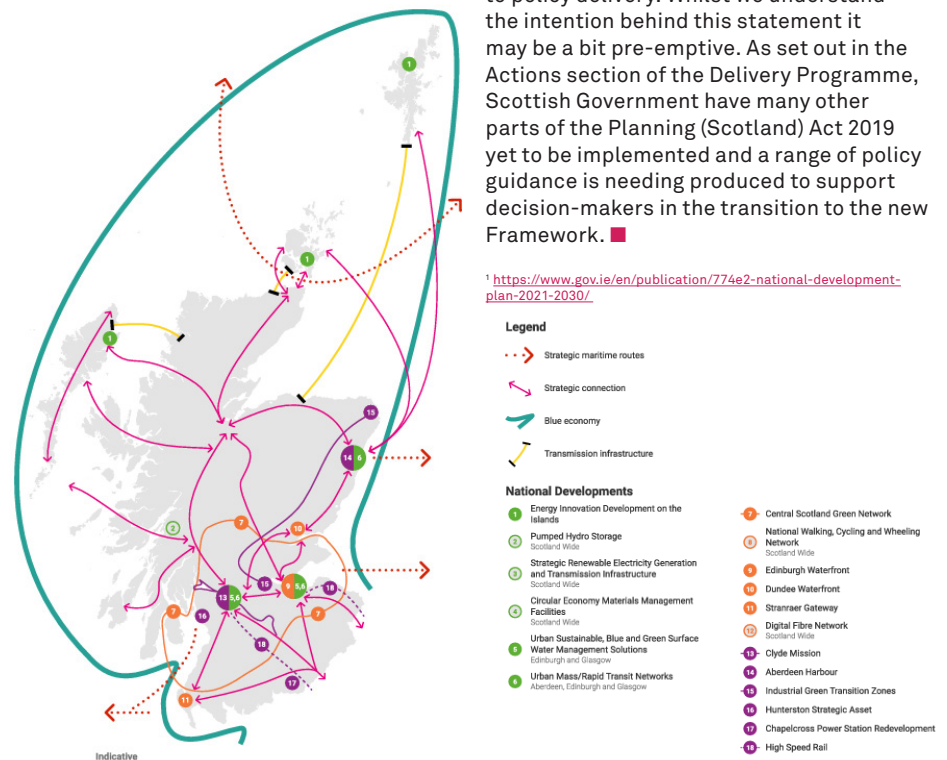
of the NPF4 to be aligned other national plans, programmes, and strategies - particularly the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and the National Strategy for

Economic Transformation (NSET). The main disadvantage of this approach is around sequencing issues with the STPR2 and NSET already published and the next iteration of the IIP yet to be drafted. We understand that the intention is to position the new proposed Planning, Infrastructure and Place Advisory Group as central to the production of the next IIP and we welcome this. However, we would wish to see thinking on how this will work in practice further developed. We also await further detail as to how the Advisory group can shape and influence the delivery plans of the NSET and the STPR2.

RTPI Scotland believes that the NPF4 oversight bodies, including the Office of the National Planning Improvement Coordinator, should have a key role in ensuring alignment between the NPF4 and emerging national plans, programmes, and strategies. The Delivery Programme also sets out some consideration of how the delivery of the NPF4 can be supported by a variety of existing funding streams. This includes the Place-based investment programme, Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme, Strategic Transport Funding, Affordable Housing Supply Programme and City Region Deals and Regional Growth Deals. We noted that no mention was made to Levelling-up Funds. We welcome the reference to the Place Principle as providing the framework for choreographing sectoral strategies and funding programmes. We note the intentions are to agree and factor in funding requirements derived from the NPF4 into the Capital Spending Review and through the annual Budget process but would wish to see how key stakeholders can be included in this process.

So, what now for the revised draft NPF4? The LGHPC are to submit a report following on from the evidence sessions to parliament and we will then have a full parliamentary debate followed by a vote. RTPI Scotland has recommended that the LGHCP support the approval of the Framework in their report. Within the delivery programme it is set out that the Scottish Government Planning Architecture and Regeneration Division will move from policy development to policy delivery. Whilst we understand the intention behind this statement it may be a bit pre-emptive. As set out in the Actions section of the Delivery Programme, Scottish Government have many other parts of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 yet to be implemented and a range of policy guidance is needed produced to support decision-makers in the transition to the new Framework. ■

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/774e2-national-development-plan-2021-2030/>



Q&A

Public Enquiries

Rhiannon Moore MRTPI, Senior Planner at Montagu Evans & Scottish Young Planner of the Year 2022 answers our questions.



Rhiannon Moore
MRTPI,
Senior Planner at
Montagu Evans

1 Who has been the biggest inspiration or influence on your career and why?

I have been very fortunate to work with a number of inspirational planners throughout my career. From my very first planning job as a summer student at Tayplan, I was inspired by Pam Ewen. Her enthusiasm for planning shown through everything she did. I also admired her drive to find solutions that deliver outstanding results for people and places.

What has always resonated with me is that Pam has never lost the joy. That spark you get from delivering good results, working with others, and finding solutions; from being a good planner.

It's relatively easy to find people to inspire you in planning, I know I could name a few. The difficulty is often finding people who will stand up and shout about their amazing work.

2 What do you feel is the biggest issue facing planners and planning at the moment?

One of the most pressing issues we are facing in planning is with resourcing. One of my biggest concerns is the impact this will have on already overstretched local authority planners. I also worry about the risk that this could lead to people leaving the profession.

One of the main reasons we are under-resourced is that people don't know about planning. They are not discovering the profession as a potential career path. We should be teaching planning in schools. It's essential that people understand the role planning can play, socially, environmentally and economically, and how it's shaping the places of our future. By adding planning to the curriculum, we could inspire a new generation of planners, which would help to solve the resourcing issues.

3 Why is planning important?

Planning is important because it influences everything we do. It plays a role in where and how we live, work, and play. There is a clear, demonstrable link between good places and good social, economic and environmental outcomes. Planning underpins all we do. I don't think we can stress enough how important planning is, both now and in the future.

4 Where do you think best exemplifies planning's role in creating great places for people?

You can find the benefits of planning in the everyday. Creating great places is underpinned in almost all that we do in planning. Whether striving for high-quality design, better quality open space or public realm, biodiversity net gain, developing a robust policy framework that allows for sustainable growth, whatever it may be. There is no one example of what good planning is, and it would be impossible to narrow it down as planning can be so broad. When done right, planning will always deliver great places for people.

“You can find the benefits of planning in the everyday. Creating great places is underpinned in almost all that we do in planning.”

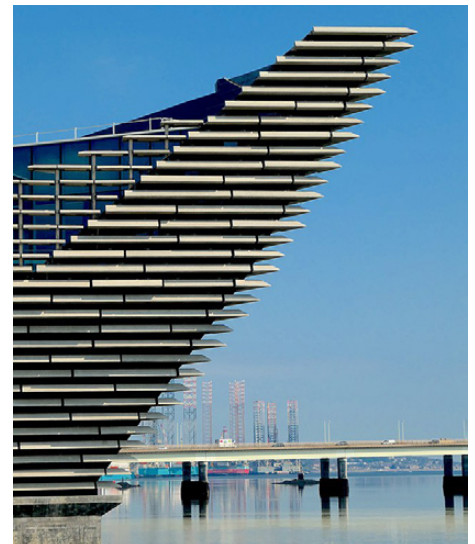
5 What one piece of advice would you give an early career planner?

Don't be afraid to make yourself heard by asking questions, sharing your views, or challenging the status quo. Too often, in the early stages, we are too afraid to speak up as we don't have all the answers.

The truth is no one has all the answers. Often something that has been done in a certain way for a long time is in need of a fresh perspective. A new outlook can bring positive change.

It's important to understand what is being done and why and to challenge this if you think it could be done better. Of course, it might not always be that you get the outcome you are looking for. But at least you will have widened your understanding!

No one will become an expert without asking questions. ■



Immaterial Considerations

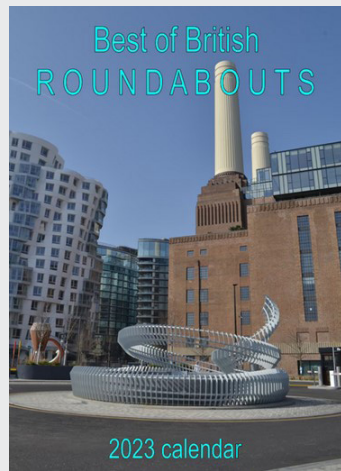
An irreverent look at the world of planning...

Introducing the planning calendar for 2023...

Given the need for planners across Scotland to be prepared for 2023 - what with a new National Planning Framework, revised development plan guidelines, new bits of the 2019 Act to be brought in etc – the Immaterial considerations team thought we would provide a public service and highlight the best planning-themed calendars.

Roundabouts

Our first suggestion is more for the transport planners amongst you who we're sure would be delighted to receive the "2023 Best of British Roundabouts wall calendar". Forgive us for not knowing, but apparently this is something of an institution that has "converted many new disciples to the One-Way-Gyratory cause" and that after collecting the yearly calendar "people who otherwise had not given traffic islands a second glance now gaze upon them with awe, respect and affection".



Metropia

Next up is the Metropia 2023 Wall Calendar which is described as "the perfect way to travel the world over 12 months. Featuring some of the most popular Metropia cities including Edinburgh, Madrid, Kyiv, San Francisco, London, Paris, Tokyo, Melbourne, Barcelona, New York City, Toronto, Berlin. Looks lovely but, no, we don't know what metropia means either..."



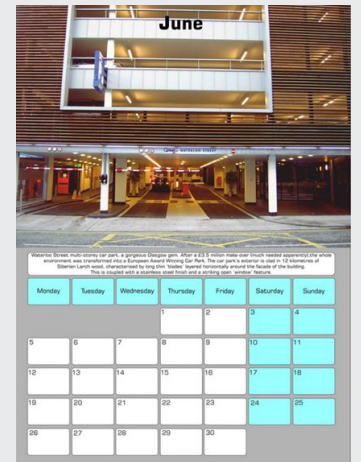
Brutalism

Our third choice is for the hardened stylist and is the EU, UK & World Brutalism Wall Calendar 2023 which – as it says here – is perfect for a year calendar with one page for each month where you will get "a gorgeous vibrant print featuring a Brutalist gem which will look amazing whether at home or in the office". Buildings include Preston Bus Station, The Bank of Georgia, Delft University and the Western City Gate in Serbia.



Car Parks

Our final calendar – and perhaps our favourite – is the Car Parks of Britain 2023. The person responsible for this proudly states that this took them from John O' Groats to Lands End to allow us to "witness the sheer horror of Britain's most haunted car park, where hundreds have been butchered. Take in the best view in Britain from a car park. Find out which car park enjoys the most exhilarating ramps. Be shocked at the car park that charges you £47.80 for 4 hours. Raise your eyebrows at the multi-storey car park that no one loves or goes to, even though it only charges 15p an hour." It includes some Scottish entries...



In Focus: Apprenticeships

Nick Springthorpe, Intern Project Officer at RTPI Scotland, discusses the development of RTPI’s business case for chartered town planner apprenticeships in Scotland and the wide-reaching implications for future resourcing achievable through it.



Nick Springthorpe,
Intern Project Officer
at RTPI Scotland

It’s common knowledge within the planning sector of the visionary potential it has for dealing with current societal and environmental crises. The recent release of the revised draft NPF4 and related policy documents clearly shows this ambition from the Scottish Government with a clear primacy given to dealing with the accelerating nature and climate emergencies, as well as socio-economic well-being.

However, it is also common knowledge that there are perennial resourcing issues following the raft of public sector cuts after 2009. The unsustainable situation of an ageing workforce and inadequate young planner supply has the potential to lead to a skills crisis and void of experience and knowledge along the current trajectory that would put the efficacy of Scotland’s planning services at risk. Currently, only 8% of local planning authority staff are below the age

RTPI Scotland has been focussed leading advocacy for this combined sectoral issue with other key stakeholders, calling for the development of resourcing and fostering young planning talent as part of a realistic and pragmatic delivery programme for the planning act. A key source of data for this is collaborative research culminating in the Future Planners Project Report (2022) focussed on the primary causes of the unsustainable young planners pipeline, highlighting three key action points:

- Positive promotion of planning as a sector and career, particularly as a ‘green job’ giving personal and collaborative agency in Scotland’s climate goals;
- Recruitment of young talent into the sector, making the most of advertising and engagement pathways to attract people towards a career in planning;
- Retention of staff within the sector.

The development of this business case follows the growing success of an RTPI-accredited planning apprenticeships scheme in England which was implemented in 2019 and grown to over 400 apprentices. RTPI Scotland sees the clear potential in this model to attract young Scots to the sector, with the attractive opportunity to “work, earn & learn”; particularly important as the labour market remains competitive and troubling to many young people. Tying this in with younger generations’ awareness of climate change and eagerness to be involved in developing a sustainable and adapted future provides fertile opportunity to re-brand planning in the positive and powerful light it deserves. Research by Future Learn gives grounding to this, 78% of those sampled born after 1997 considering “sustainability personally important to them”, and 1 in 5 actively seeking employment that prioritises climate action, sustainability, and environmental protection. A sense of this eagerness was captured in RTPI’s successful 2022 RTPI EXPLORE programme, which involved 80 placement students across the UK from London to Glasgow: particularly from Asian, Black, and minority ethnic communities and lower socio-economic backgrounds. From this experience, 93% of students said they would consider a career in town planning, up from an initial 37%.

Thus, the apprenticeship business case is progressing to tie these important findings together, emphasising the opportunity to develop a Future Planners pipeline that is inclusive, diverse and forward-thinking. RTPI Scotland sees this as a vital element of a comprehensive resource and skills strategy in Scotland for the long-term public benefit, and we look forward to bringing a completed case to the Scottish Government in the next months as NPF4 reaches its final stage of scrutiny. ■

“These ambitions for a just transition, net-zero and climate resilience in Scotland are mutually inclusive with a high-performing, well-resourced planning sector. RTPI Scotland has been focussed leading advocacy for this combined sectoral issue, calling for the development of resourcing and fostering young planning talent as part of a realistic and pragmatic delivery programme for the Planning Act.”

of 30, and a projected increase in staffing by 58% is needed on 2020/21 levels to keep up with personnel demand. Thus, these ambitions for a just transition, net-zero and climate resilience in Scotland are mutually inclusive with a high-performing, well-resourced planning sector.

Focussing on the first two of these findings, RTPI Scotland is currently developing a business case to bring to the Scottish Government regarding the opportunity of graduate apprenticeships for chartered town planners – a space in Scotland’s education landscape that currently lies unfilled.

In Practice: Housing Completions Edinburgh



Nicola Woodward
MRTPI, Senior
Director at Lichfields
in Edinburgh

Nicola Woodward MRTPI, Senior Director at Lichfields in Edinburgh, discusses Lichfield’s ‘Start to Finish’ research on Edinburgh’s housing delivery and its relation to local planning policy.

Start to Finish is RTPI award winning research undertaken by Lichfields.

This article sets out the key findings for Edinburgh’s Start to Finish Profile, and hopefully it gives food for thought to Scotland’s local authorities as they put in place the evidence bases for their new local development plans.

“It is important that Local Authorities understand the lead-in times for development in their individual local authority areas to ensure enough deliverable sites are identified to meet housing needs over a plan period”

It is not always recognised that there can be a significant time lag between the allocation of a housing site and the delivery of homes from that site. There are many factors that play a role in this.

For Edinburgh, we looked at housing development sites in the city that were completed over a 5-year period (April 2016 - March 2021) to get a sense of how long it takes for smaller sites (less than 400 units) to deliver new homes from first planning permission to first homes built, to completion. 159 sites were considered which between them delivered over 9000 new homes. We also considered two of much larger sites (one brownfield and one greenfield) that are still developing out and tracked their journey.

The key findings for Edinburgh were that it takes 2-3 years on average from first planning permission being granted to first homes being

delivered (that said more than 9 sites took more than 10 years).

The overall Start to Finish profile for recent housing development in Edinburgh is: 3-4 years for sites comprising less than 50 homes, and 5-6 years for sites comprising 50-399 new homes. The greenfield case study site (1000 new homes) will have a profile of 16 years and the brownfield case study site (1881 new homes) a profile of 31 years if they develop out as programmed.

These figures record only the time taken from first gaining planning permission to completion but if we add in the time taken to get from a site being allocated to when it receives planning permission that can add more years to the process.

Looking at Edinburgh’s 2016 LDP, we can see that by March 2021: 10 Of the 25 new allocations hadn’t delivered any new homes although 19 did have a planning permission. 4 of these

permissions were granted before the plan was adopted, 11 within 2 years, 4 within 4 years and 6 still did not have planning permission 5 years on.

We are moving to a 10-year Local Development Plan so there will be more time for new allocations to gain consent and start to deliver new homes. But new allocations will not deliver homes straight away, many will not deliver their full allocation and some will not deliver within the plan period at all.

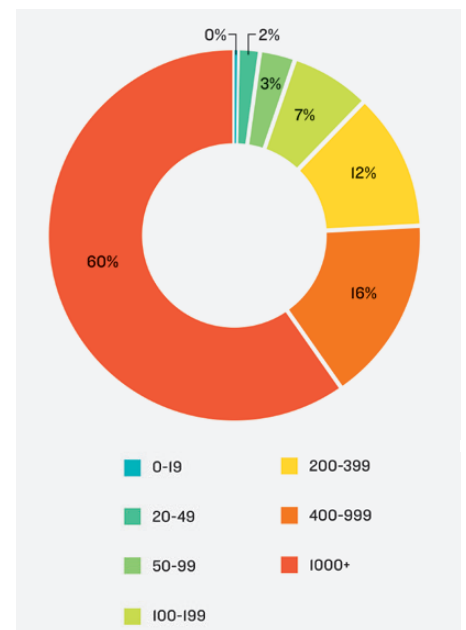
Clearly, it is important that Local Authorities understand the lead-in times for development in their individual local authority areas to ensure enough deliverable sites are identified to meet housing needs over a plan period.

In the Edinburgh context, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that on average it could be 4-5 years before the

most straightforward new allocated sites start delivering new homes. For very large or challenging sites lead-in times would be very much longer. A site of less than 400 new homes has a good chance of building out within a 10 year plan period particularly if it already has planning permission. Sites that are larger and don’t have planning permission when the Local Development Plan is adopted will only feasibly deliver new homes in the latter years of a plan period.

This is a matter that requires serious consideration by each Local Authority if future housing allocations are to deliver for Scotland’s very real housing needs.

Lichfields Start to Finish Insights are available on their website [Search | Lichfields](#)



Article:

Water and Nature Based Solutions



Gillian Dick MRTPI,
Spatial Planning
Manager – Research
& Development at
Glasgow City Council

Gillian Dick MRTPI, the Spatial Planning Manager – Research & Development at Glasgow City Council, discusses the merits of nature-based solutions as part of place-focussed strategic drainage initiatives in Glasgow involving the River Clyde.

If I asked you to name the biggest open space in Glasgow, what would you say? When I've asked the question of colleagues they say Pollok Park, Kelvingrove or Glasgow Green, but actually it's the River Clyde with its combination of blue, grey and green open spaces. It winds its way through the city and over hundreds of years it was the beating heart. Now though it sits as a combination of abandoned post-industrial sites and several attempts to reimagine and redevelop. The

social and economic benefits and help build resilience."

I often talk about a nature-based solution being any action, strategy, policy, or intervention in a spatial context that simultaneously does no harm to the social cohesion, health and wellbeing, and biodiversity of the interacting human and natural ecosystem in which it is actioned, as well as no harm to the economy. Now this is different from our business-as-usual interventions which focus solely on the economy and try to mitigate damage to the other four outcomes. The other focus of a nature-based solution is that to reach the desired outcomes, you must acknowledge that most interventions are not clean and linear with beginning, middles and ends: to mitigate harm, the intervention is an iterative process and requires a stewardship phase that may bring you back around to the

the river and each other.

There's still a lot of work to do and we are working collaboratively with SEPA, Scottish Water and colleagues at Glasgow University on the NERC Gallant project to understand the opportunities that deploying Nature-based solutions can provide us. Particularly, how it can help us to unlock the multitude of different vacant and derelict sites along the banks of the Clyde. Through the work on H2020 Connecting Nature we have co-created the Co-impact app (www.co-impact.app) tool that takes the 156 NBS impact assessment indicators and walks you through which ones would work for your action and how to iteratively use these indicators to improve your outcomes. We're also the home for the ICLEI UrbanByNature Scottish hub which aims, through a series of lunch and learns, to share peer to peer learning on NBS. An intro session was held on 27th Oct and the next session in December will be on Urban forestry followed in January by a session on the Water environment. ■

"As the West of Scotland gets wetter and warmer the high tide incidents coinciding with heavy rain create critical risk points for the city. But the fact that the Clyde is our biggest open space also offers potential to solve some of these problems"

Clyde is a coastal river all the way to the tidal weir in Glasgow Green. As the West of Scotland gets wetter and warmer the high tide incidents coinciding with heavy rain create critical risk points for the city. But the fact that the Clyde is our biggest open space also offers potential to solve some of these problems. Through the work on our Open Space Strategy and H2020 Connecting Nature we are now trying to take a Place-based approach using Nature-based solutions to create climate adaptive places.

So, what is a nature-based solution? The European Commission defines Nature-based solutions (NbS) as:

"Solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental,

planning and delivery stages. This requires co-production and collaboration with our communities.

So, in a Glasgow context the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage partnership have developed water management solutions within parks and school playgrounds. There's an acknowledgement that the public don't necessarily need to know that they have a new drainage system, they just need to know that they have a great space to use. We need to get smarter at designing with the water and understanding where we will have to work with the river to change the way that the city interacts with the river. This provides opportunities for the creation of a linear park with the Clyde at its centre. Reconnecting the city and its river edge communities back to



Article:

Scottish Water: Supporting a flourishing Scotland through treating water as a precious resource



Amanda Marshall,
Development Planner
at Scottish Water

Amanda Marshall, Development Planner at Scottish Water, elaborates on planning's role in protecting and adapting to changing water resources in Scotland as climate change progresses.

Scottish Water is a public agency answerable to the people of Scotland through the Scottish Government and we are trusted to care for the water on which Scotland depends. One of our core duties is to support sustainable economic growth by identifying and delivering new strategic capacity to meet the demand of all new housing development and domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development.

Development Services have a dedicated Development Planning team who do this through early engagement with all Planning Authorities and inputting as a Key Agency into the creation of Local Development Plans (LDPs) The objective is to ensure development can be directed, where possible, to areas where we have infrastructure in place with capacity. Where capacity limitations exist, we work to ensure solutions can be identified and delivered as early as possible.

How Scottish Water is Supporting Development in Scotland...

New developments connecting to the public water or drainage networks must comply with a zero-detriment approach; new connections cannot impact our existing network or customers negatively. From 2017, we have supported Planning Authorities development ambitions by carrying out Strategic Network Impact modelling activities, assessing complex hydraulic networks against the cumulative impacts from multi-developments identified in LDPs and Housing Land Audits. In 2021, we advanced this concept by launching an innovative new model to become an infrastructure delivery provider of network upgrades identified in strategic modelling outputs. This is enabling us to deliver sustainable solutions supporting multiple developments, targeted in the right location,

delivering just ahead of need, building greater network resilience through new assets, and at times, improving our existing network.

Through investing in creating capacity at our strategic assets - water and wastewater treatment work- we can ensure allocated sites in LDPs are serviced by public supply. Between 2021-27 we plan to deliver around £250 million of investment to provide new capacity at our treatment works to support development in Scotland.

Adapting to a Changing Climate...

Scotland's changing climate brings greater challenges in how we collectively work to plan for new developments. A fundamental risk is increasing intensity of storm events resulting in flooding. The management of surface water from new developments is vital to deliver sustainable placemaking. We strongly support managing surface water above ground through blue-green infrastructure. In this area, there is a requirement to work collaboratively with others including housebuilders and Local Authorities to deliver opportunities for LDPs.

One recent example of this is the partnership between Scottish Water and other agencies to implement creative solutions to severe surface water constraints by establishing a Smart Canal which delivers significant carbon savings and unlocked 110 hectares of land for development of 3,000 homes in North Glasgow.

Conserving water and treating this as a precious resource is not always to the forefront of the public mood in Scotland with our rainy climate. However, water scarcity in the East of Scotland is a growing challenge, especially when looking to the West to East population shift across Scotland. This requires collective effort to tackle, and one aspect is planning for and building greener developments with water resilience measures at the heart of design to underpin the ethos that water is always worth saving.

Resources for Planners

The SUDS Working Party produced the '[Water Assessment and Drainage Assessment Guide](#)' Water drainage assessment guide (sepa.org.uk) covering a variety of water and drainage matters for planners.

Further information about Development Services, Scottish Water guidance and policy documents and can be located at [Development Services Portal - Scottish Water](#).

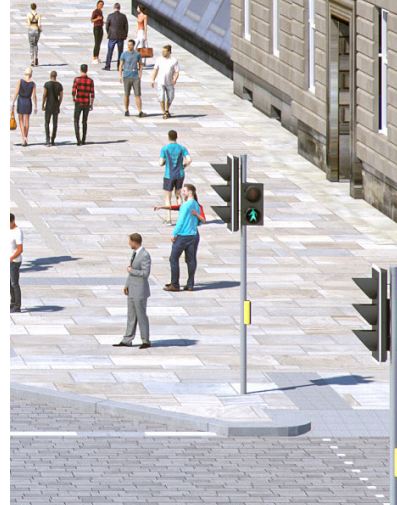
To contact Development Planning developmentplanningandliaison@scottishwater.co.uk.

“Scotland’s changing climate brings greater challenges in how we collectively work to plan for new developments. A fundamental risk is increasing intensity of storm events resulting in flooding. The management of surface water from new developments is vital to deliver sustainable placemaking”



Article: Water Resilient Edinburgh

Julie Waldron MRTPI, Senior Planner (Landscape and Water) at City of Edinburgh Council, outlines the city's 'Water Vision' for building climate change resilience to extreme rainfall into Edinburgh's fabric and its alignment with other policy goals.



Water Resilient Edinburgh

"The brown water cascades down the road at a worrying pace, we're going full power, foots down on the pedal, but the fear inside is written on her face, we have to get through, but the water is strong and the short burst of speed won't last very long."

These are my daughter's words from her poem 'The Sky is Crying' inspired when we were caught in a flash flood. Experiencing climate change first hand is a reminder that we all need to act now, not in five years, but today.

This was also the urgency expressed at the 2019 Climate Change Emergency Conference by the Youth Leader, whose frustration at how slow 'we' were moving was palpable.

Our recent 'Rapid Climate Risk assessment' says Edinburgh will experience 5 times as many 'Flood days' by 2060, with a 5°C rise in summer, higher intensity of rainfall all year and more winter rain by 2070.

So, we have been leading on pieces of work with support from SEPA, Scottish Water (the Edinburgh and Lothians Strategic Drainage Partnership - ELSDP) and Nature Scot that aligns with the Scottish Government Regulations 1.

The first piece of work is our strategic overview of water in the City – 'The Water Vision' which is now Council wide policy 2.

Once agreed at Committee, we started to get better SuDS schemes almost immediately responding to the Vision's objectives. We

had guidance ready 3, our Surface Water Management Guidance and we are currently working on more factsheets ; 'Raingardens in Roads' with Abertay University and the Green roofs factsheet because we need to ensure all our officers from various departments across the council have agreed the way we are looking to change our city.

But we also needed to know which areas of the city we should dig up first. So, another objective of the Water Vision was to create a Green Blue Citywide network. The Atkins landscape team analysed all the information we had available, plus new ecosystems services, our strategic flood risk assessment, and Scottish Water's sewer risk information. In parallel Scottish Wildlife Trust were working with CEC on Edinburgh's Nature Network which included looking at priority habitats connectivity. The Atkins ecologist worked with them and brought this into the project. 4

The network was prepared for our new City Plan 2030 and is linked to policy and we will be updating it soon with Motts MacDonald's surface water management plans.

A list of priority areas was also defined and the ELSDP is looking in more detail at 3 of these. CEC manages the townscape, ecology, and roads design with, Atkins working closely with Scottish Water who are providing detailed modelling to drive the concept designs. The consultant's team will then take this forward. At the same time, we will maximise active travel routes, ecological

connectivity and embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

The ELSDP is also looking at ways to remove surface water out of the sewers and working together virtually, led by Scottish Water, has allowed us to move this work forward speedily.

The greatest challenge we have is money for consultancy work and resources. Funds tend to focus on active travel and nature, but we need a holistic, multi-disciplinary focus.

When we have landscape architects, flood engineers and roads engineers working together with support from others, it is possible to create beautiful, biodiverse, water resilient and well-connected places. But we must not forget long-term maintenance, particularly for drought periods. Because a climate adapted, connected 'green blue' city is also a living, breathing entity. ■



Julie Waldron MRTPI,
Senior Planner at City
of Edinburgh Council

Article: Inverness Hydro

David Mudie MRTPI, Area Planning Manager (South) at The Highland Council, describes the cross-cutting success of the Hydro Ness hydroelectric scheme and its contribution to decarbonised energy and placemaking in the Inverness region.



David Mudie MRTPI,
Area Planning
Manager (South) at
The Highland Council

The Highlands have a long and proud history of harnessing power from water. One of the most recent such projects, the award winning Hydro Ness, makes use of early 20th century abandoned infrastructure along with more ancient technology in what is an innovative, cost effective, 21st century solution to meeting our current energy needs.

Hydro Ness is a £2.67m self-financing project delivered by The Highland Council. The project includes a 92kW 'Archimedes Screw' hydroelectric scheme with interactive visitor experience on the west bank of the River Ness. The asset is designed to last well over 50 years.

The development sits within a wider area of change to Inverness where, guided by development briefs, key land uses have been reconfigured to accommodate vital infrastructure and deliver development capacity. Hydro Ness contributes to this placemaking and complements a new gateway for visitors and locals in the city and a neighbourhood-focussed approach to accommodating growth.

Hydro Ness provides a number of benefits to Inverness City and the wider Highland region, including:

- carbon savings of 142,000kg CO2e per annum that will help the Council meet ambitious climate targets;
- generating and supplying around 50% of the electricity demand to Inverness Leisure Centre – one of the highest consuming buildings in The Highland Council's estate;
- long-term financial stability, protecting the Council from future energy price increases;
- providing a visitor experience with interpretive content within a landscaping setting that is fully accessible by the public; and
- creating a hub for STEM learning.

With the River Ness connected to the River Moriston Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for, amongst other interests, its population of Atlantic Salmon, great care was required to ensure that this sensitive environment and its Salmon were carefully considered.

The use of simple, effective, and proven engineering ensures that the scheme works with nature, rather than against, to create renewable energy. The technology is such that Salmon can navigate the river without risk of harm, which can be demonstrated through use of a connected fish counter.

The overall approach, the selection of the technology and the appropriate controls on construction, enabled the proposal to achieve the conservation objectives ensuring a timeous grant of planning permission.

While acknowledging its vitally important

functional purpose, a key outcome of the planning process was to create a building with identity and visual appeal. The solution was to form a steel exoskeleton covered in individually tailored stainless-steel panels to create a strong aesthetic reflective of its location. Planting and landscaping have improved this once neglected area of the river and popular core active travel corridor.

The building's location and design, along with the use of high quality, robust and fully bespoke interpretation, where visitors are encouraged to access the QR content through a 'Bring Your Own Device' approach, allows a truly immersive visitor experience.

As a hub for STEM, this simple yet beautiful practical example of green engineering will, it is hoped, inspire future generations to build upon the Highland renewable legacy. ■



Article: Aquaculture

Morag Ferguson, Planning Manager (Development Management) at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, discusses the lesser known but vital planning consideration of fish and shellfish aquaculture in Scotland and the role for Marine Planning.



Morag Ferguson,
Planning Manager
(Development
Management) at
Comhairle nan
Eilean Siar

“All at Sea.....”

It is perhaps lesser known that since 2007, the jurisdiction of the Scottish ‘Land Use’ Planning System, has included marine coastal waters, out to 3 nautical miles of UK territorial waters - but only for the purposes of marine fish farming.

Fish farming, including the breeding, rearing or keeping of fish or shellfish, is unique amongst activities in the Scottish marine environment, in that it requires planning permission.

The growing of shellfish, predominately mussels and the farming of fin-fish, largely salmon and trout, started as small scale, supplementary income activity in the 1970s. Since then, these industries have grown, innovated and revolutionised farming practices. As a consequence, the nature and scale of spatial demands by the industry have changed and challenged the planning system to respond.

The fin-fish sector produces almost 200,000 tonnes of salmon annually (See graphic Q3 2021), much of it for export. The shellfish sector is comprised mainly of two species, Pacific oysters of which just under 5000 shells were grown in 2021 and mussel of which 8,500 tonnes were produced, 80% of that in Shetland.

The fin-fish sector is now largely controlled by a small number of multi-nationals who operate inter-nationally, bringing knowledge from other regions. New farms are on a much larger scale increasingly serviced from large boats with fish pens ranging in size from 100m to 200m circumference held in groups; with surface areas often close to 2ha and the development site boundaries demarcated by outer moorings of 50 to 70 hectares.

Mussels are grown on longlines (ropes with droppers supported by floats) typically

between 100 and 200m in length and can be arranged in individual ‘strings’ running along the coast or set out in parallel lines in lochs or voes. Oysters can be grown in mesh trays, often racked, and anchored in inter-tidal areas but also in baskets suspended in the water column.

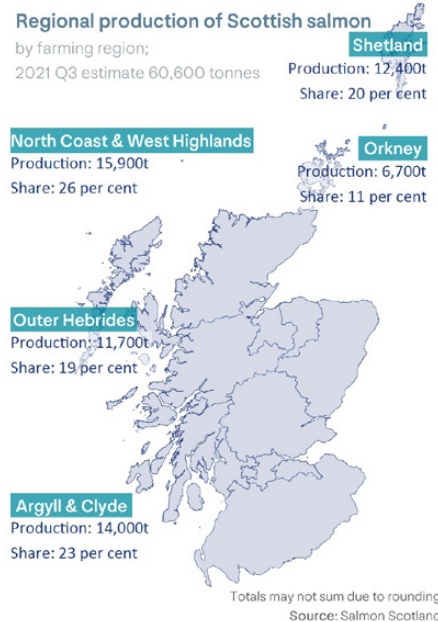
Developing a strategic planning framework to meet the future requirements of the industry is a unique challenge for the five planning authorities that host the vast majority of production sites.

The industry contributes significantly to Scotland’s economy, providing direct and supply chain employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, in turn contributing to population retention and community vitality in many remote parts of the country. However, planning for its future requires accommodation of competing users of the marine environment, minimising risks to wildfish, managing impacts upon marine habitats and species while protecting iconic landscapes and visual amenity.

The number of officers working in this niche area of planning is small and, therefore, the Local Authority Officers Aquaculture Group (formed 10 years ago) has provided a valuable forum for officers from the five applicable planning authorities to discuss forward planning approaches, share learning, benchmark performance, interpret legislation and achieve consistency of approach. The Group has been able to input to various regulatory and parliamentary reviews and is a useful conduit for engagement with Government.

The west coast and Island authorities (moratorium on fish farming on Scotland’s east coast) rely on specific aquaculture policies and increasingly Regional Marine

Plans where available, to guide development. Shetland has the most developed Marine Planning policy of all authorities in Scotland on account of the Zetland County Council Act 1974 that gave powers over the sea around Shetland including the grant of works licences, and has amassed a vast knowledge base from which it could plan. Orkney Islands Council and Highland Council have collaborated with Marine Scotland on the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan while Argyll and Bute is an active partner in the development of the Firth of Clyde Marine Spatial Plan. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is at the start of its Marine Planning and will gain knowledge from the experience of others. ■



Article: Falkirk's Canals

Alistair Shaw MRTPI, Development Plan Co-ordinator at Falkirk Council, underscores the successes of revitalising Scotland's canals and their successive positive impact on planning outcomes.



Alistair Shaw MRTPI,
Development Plan
Co-ordinator at
Falkirk Council

Falkirk's Canal Journey

Earlier this year, the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Falkirk Wheel, which was the culmination of the £83m Millennium Link project, provided an opportunity to reflect what has been achieved along Scotland's Lowland Canals over the intervening two decades. The project was never meant to be purely about reopening navigation along the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals. It was heralded as a means of unlocking a corridor of regeneration across the Central Belt. The opening of the Wheel marked the end of one journey - the long fight to rescue and restore our forgotten and neglected waterways. But it was the beginning of another – the task of breathing life back into the places and people along their banks.

Falkirk is at the heart of the Lowland Canals, and Falkirk Council embraced the challenge from the start, identifying a network of key nodes, development opportunities, and connections, and embedding these in successive plans and strategies. A close strategic partnership was forged with what was then British Waterways and later became Scottish Canals, which has provided a strong basis for project delivery to this day.

The Wheel as a tourist attraction was an instant success, and much early work focused

on creating additional infrastructure and facilities needed to support it. Meanwhile, strong synergies emerged between the restored canals and the Council's Greenspace Initiative. Connections were improved between the canals, adjacent communities, and our fast developing and award-winning green network.

The development of the Helix and the Kelpies at the eastern terminus of the Forth and Clyde Canal was a product of this synergy, as well as providing a much needed way of improving access for vessels to and from the Forth. Funded by the BIG Lottery Fund, the project provided the second of the two iconic canal-based attractions which have transformed the perception of Falkirk and made it a magnet for visitors from around the world.

But there is much more to be done, particularly to animate the corridor between The Kelpies and the Wheel, and to connect it more effectively with Falkirk Town Centre. Although much new canalside housing has been built on former industrial land along this corridor, economic headwinds and site complexities have frustrated progress on some key opportunities such as the large swathe of derelict and contaminated land at Portdownie, between the Wheel and Lock 16. However, momentum is being maintained

through the exciting rehabilitation of the Rosebank Distillery by Ian McLeod Distillers, a landmark canalside listed building on the western approach to the Town Centre.

Going forward, the canals remain central to area's future prosperity and wellbeing, ticking all the boxes in terms of NPF4's vision of 20-minute neighbourhoods, net-zero communities, and community wealth building. Two key projects feature in Falkirk's Growth Deal. Scotland's Canal Centre at Lock 16 will repurpose underused industrial buildings to create a business, enterprise and community hub, providing a new HQ for Scottish Canals, and a focus for addressing social and economic disadvantage in the local area, while Scotland's National Art Park will use culture and creativity to further develop the sense of cohesion, excitement and place along the canal corridor from The Kelpies to the Wheel.

Considering the scale of funding and investment that the canals have pulled in over the last 20 years and their incalculable value to quality of life in the area, the Millennium Link's price tag of £83m now seems extremely good value. The canals remain an intrinsic part of Falkirk's heritage and identity, their rebirth a symbol of the regeneration of our area, and a testimony to the enduring attraction of water as a setting for living, business and leisure. Falkirk's canal journey continues... ■



Article:

Anchor's Aweigh – Priorities for Scotland's Second National Marine Plan



Duncan Smart MRTPI, Senior Planning & Environmental Policy Analyst at Scottish Power Renewables

Duncan Smart MRTPI, Senior Planning & Environmental Policy Analyst at Scottish Power Renewables, outlines the significance of developing marine planning policy in the NMP2 and the need for clarified priorities to be struck in developing offshore wind technologies to meet net-zero targets.

The commencement of work to prepare Scotland's National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2) is a long awaited and welcome step. A new plan is needed to respond to wide-ranging environmental, technological and policy changes since Scotland's first National Marine Plan (NMP1) was published in 2015, not least the declaration of a climate emergency by the Scottish Government. NMP2 also needs to provide a stronger consenting framework given the growth in marine development activities already experienced since 2015 and the significant further increase in offshore wind and related grid infrastructure projects expected as a result of Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind and INTOG offshore wind leasing rounds.

Staying on the right tack

Given the current flurry of consenting activities across multiple marine sectors the lag between the 2nd review of NMP1 in Spring 2021 and the start of work to prepare NMP2 in late Autumn 2022 is unfortunate, but the timing does at least now offer a good opportunity to enhance the integration of terrestrial and marine planning across Scotland. Coming amidst the final stages of developing National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which once finalised will carry an enhanced status in consenting and provide national policy positions of relevance to both terrestrial and marine developments, the preparation of NMP2 should seek to quickly dovetail with and build on this platform rather than duplicating policies or re-inventing the wheel. Synergies could also be generated by aligning NMP2 with emerging findings from the ongoing Iterative Plan Review (IPR) of the Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore

Wind to provide an objective and consistent basis for determining the adequacy of mitigation and compensation proposals and the acceptability of residual impacts from developments. However, such benefits will only be achieved if an 'all of Government' approach is adopted rather than NMP2 being developed solely from a marine perspective.

Once finalised, NPF4 will provide the settled view of the Scottish Government on a host of cross-cutting issues including responding to the climate emergency, addressing the nature crisis, adopting an Infrastructure First approach and accelerating the deployment of strategic-scale renewables. These policies could be adapted through criteria within NMP2 to reflect the context of marine activities and environments, without a need for duplication or to develop wholly new approaches. As well as avoiding policy contradictions this offers the potential to streamline NMP2, focus policy development on addressing specific marine issues and therefore expedite plan preparation. Building on cross-cutting policy positions already established through NPF4 also provides a potential opportunity for these positions, once expressed in Draft NMP2, to be afforded enhanced weight in marine consenting compared with Draft NPF4 (2021) where only limited weight could be afforded by decision makers as it is yet to receive parliamentary approval.

The NMP2 process should learn lessons from NPF4, including the need for integrated policy development between topics. From the outset, consideration should be given to how this plan, including all constituent policies and strategy components, will be used to inform assessments, facilitate stakeholder



engagement, and make consistent decisions across multiple consenting regimes (marine licencing, Section 36 applications for electricity generating stations, harbour orders, etc). To facilitate predictable and timely decision making it will therefore be vital for NMP2 to set out a clear policy hierarchy which prioritises the need to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, to recognise linkages between thematic policies and to explain how consenting decisions involving multiple policies, impacts, benefits, and other issues will be made on a consistent basis. This should mean moving away from flat lists of environmental considerations towards setting out more clearly structured policy criteria, indicating how the weight to be afforded to these should be determined and seeking to increase proportionality in impact assessments.

Navigating stormy seas

The second review of NMP1 identified the urgent need to tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss as a core driver for preparing a new plan. Scotland's Marine Assessment 2020 also singles out climate change as the most critical factor affecting the Scottish marine environment and identifies marine renewable energy and natural carbon sinks (blue carbon) as key opportunities for mitigation. To deliver this, NMP2 should provide an updated policy framework which prioritises and maximises Scotland's renewable energy potential whilst strongly protecting and enhancing the marine environment. New environmental policies will be required to underpin robust impact assessments and consenting, including in relation to providing mechanisms for the delivery of ecological compensation under the Habitats Regulations and more widely securing nature-positive development in the marine environment.

Keep rowing in the same direction

Achieving greater coexistence between marine industries and enabling equitable decision making will also require a more detailed policy framework to be provided, as NMP1 uses relatively weak language in this area and simply encourages proposals which enable co-existence "where possible", rather than assigning priorities, allocating responsibilities or providing specific mechanisms to achieve co-existence. Regional marine planning could play an important role in facilitating co-existence and addressing competing demands for the use of marine areas by bringing stakeholders operating in the same region together to seek to agree spatially based principles, which could then be applied consistently in consenting and licensing determinations. However, to date Scotland's regional marine plans have been relatively slow to emerge and are currently only intended to extend to inshore waters, with a review of progress in 2020 questioning the priorities and desired outcomes in relation to their development. NMP2 should therefore provide fresh impetus and a co-ordinated framework for developing regional marine plans across both inshore and offshore waters in time to meaningfully inform relevant consenting decisions.

Making waves with new technologies

To facilitate efficient and effective consenting of offshore wind projects coming forward through Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind and INTOG offshore wind leasing rounds, NMP2 needs to dovetail with the Sectoral Marine Plan – Offshore Wind Energy. This relationship should help to establish the principle of offshore wind development within

leased areas, assist with assessing cumulative impacts and help to help to identify pertinent environmental issues to guide proportionate assessments in order for projects to demonstrate policy compliance. The rapid development and planned uptake of floating offshore wind technologies also means that, whereas this technology was barely referenced in NMP1, new policies will be needed to address specific opportunities and challenges. Similarly, NMP2 will need to provide clear policies to support the delivery of co-ordinated offshore electricity transmission and carbon storage infrastructure.

Let's not miss the boat

As Scotland's first national plan for the marine area, NMP1 was a landmark document which understandably took over three years to develop due to the need to embed extensive stakeholder engagement in the process.

"The NMP2 process should learn lessons from NPF4, including the need for integrated policy development between topics. From the outset, consideration should be given to how this plan, including all constituent policies and strategy components, will be used to inform assessments, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and make consistent decisions across multiple consenting regimes."

However, to meaningfully inform offshore wind developments and avoid NMP2 complicating or delaying consenting applications speed is now of the essence, as environmental assessments for ScotWind projects are well underway and consenting applications are expected to start being submitted within the next two years. This all means that NMP2 presents a great opportunity right now to build upon the platform provided by NPF4, further integrate land-use and marine planning at a national level, provide a holistic marine policy framework focused on tackling the climate and nature crises, and underpin the sustainable use of Scotland's marine environment. ■



Article: Valuing Every Drop: Water Scarcity in Scotland

Katherine Lakeman, Principal Policy Officer at SEPA, presents the imperative for water resource preservation and the key infrastructural and nature-based solutions necessary to develop resilience against more frequent summer droughts.



Katherine Lakeman,
Principal Policy
Officer at SEPA

Scotland, a country famed worldwide for its natural water environment and wet weather, is facing the reality that this apparently abundant asset is, in fact, a finite resource under increasing pressure. Climate change is expected to bring more erratic weather with more frequent and severe flood events and also extended dry periods leading to increased pressures on our water resources including in areas that have not traditionally experienced water scarcity.

There are clear signs that this change is already happening. This year parts of eastern Scotland were severely affected, resulting in the first ever suspension of abstraction licences on some rivers ⁽¹⁾. In this region:

- It was the tenth driest in 100 years and the driest since 1940;
- Eight out of the last 12 months saw below average rainfall; and,
- Groundwater levels were their lowest since records began in 2009.

SEPA supports Scotland in adapting to a changing climate and helping steward our national water resource, including warning and informing businesses, communities and individuals during periods of water scarcity. We are responsible for the forecasting, monitoring and reporting of the situation facing Scotland's water resources and produce regular water scarcity reports over the summer months ⁽²⁾.

But what does increasing water scarcity mean for how we plan for our places of the future? National Planning Framework 4 makes it clear that our future places need to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change and support the recovery and restoration of our natural environment. I'd suggest there are two main areas where planners can help reduce the future impacts of water scarcity. Firstly, by reducing the likelihood and severity of water scarcity events through the protection and restoration of peatlands and secondly, reducing demand on our water supplies through the design of our future places.

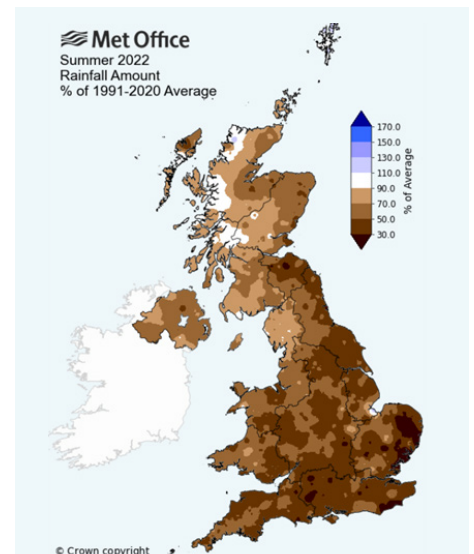
The role of our peatlands in providing water security cannot be overestimated. Recent research estimates that in the UK, 72.5% of the storage capacity of reservoirs is peatlands-fed water ⁽³⁾. Peatlands act as a natural sponge storing and regulating the release of rainwater into our rivers, lochs and reservoirs and thereby help to naturally smooth out the impacts of increasingly erratic rainfall patterns. This also helps with so many other policy priority areas of NPF4 too – not least the protection and enhancement of what is a crucial carbon store and an amazingly rich natural habitat that improves water quality and delivers natural flood management.

We also need to think smartly around how we design our buildings and spaces. Whilst some of this will fall within the scope of Building Standards, there are areas that planners should consider. Keeping surface water out of drains provides an opportunity to use that water as a positive asset for places – this can be through multi-functional blue-green infrastructure but there is also a great opportunity for it to be used to replace potable water for many uses. This not only reduces our demand for water but also the associated carbon impacts of treating and transporting drinking water.

The concept of 'water neutrality' first appeared around 2008 and is gaining renewed currency ⁽⁴⁾. Australia has long been prone to water shortages, and this has driven innovation. The region of Barangaroo in Sydney is home to an exciting urban renewal project aiming to become the first carbon neutral and water positive region ⁽⁵⁾. Closer to home, water scarcity has become an increasingly acute issue for areas of Southern England. Development proposals within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone with a water demand now need to demonstrate and robustly evidence 'water neutrality' in support of their planning application ⁽⁶⁾. Many of the solutions to delivering more water resilient places also support other

policy priorities from delivering our climate change targets and addressing the nature crisis to reducing flood risk and improving water quality. If we are to succeed, collaborative place-based approaches across a range of disciplines are needed. Moving forwards SEPA will be seeking to collaborate with a range of stakeholders to develop a series of prioritised actions to deliver a more sustainable and resilient use of this precious resource. Planners will certainly need to be at the table. ■

© Crown copyright [2022], Met Office
Met office data shows that much of Eastern Scotland received less than 70% of its usual average summer rainfall this year with some areas



receiving less than 50%

¹ [Further suspensions on abstraction licences to protect local water environment in east of Scotland | Media | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

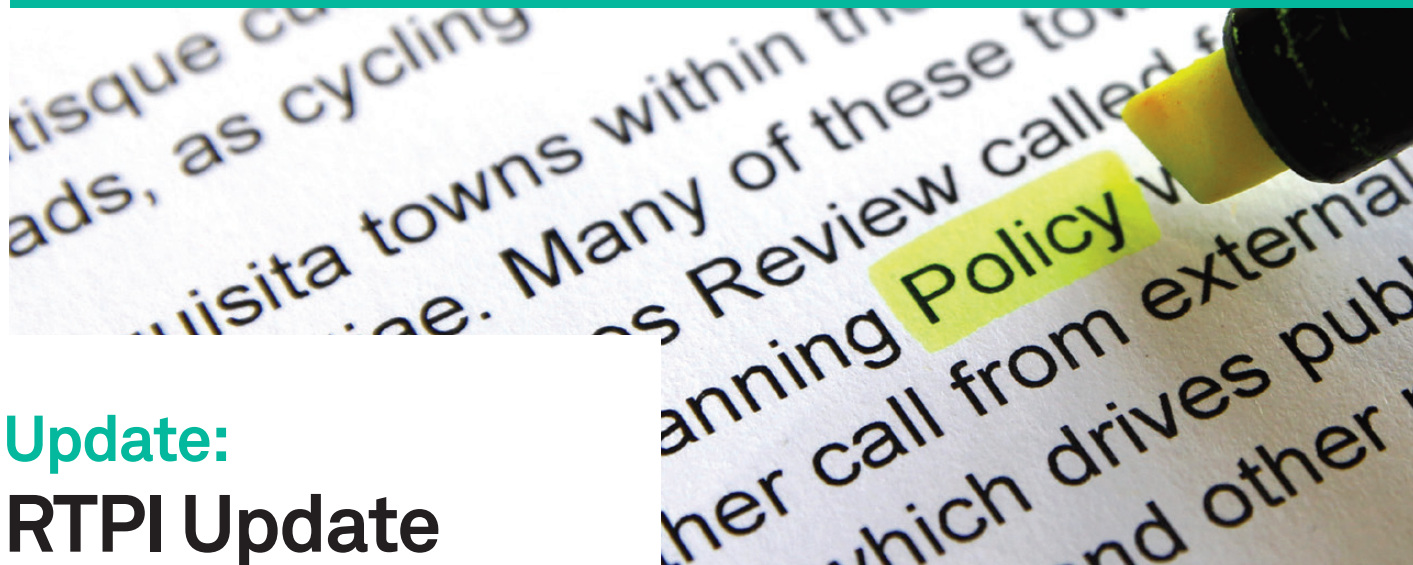
² [Previous Water Scarcity Situation reports | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

³ [Peatland contributions to UK water security | University of Leeds](#)

⁴ [A Review of Water Neutrality in the UK \(2021\) – Waterwise](#)

⁵ [Barangaroo » Sustainability](#)

⁶ [Water Neutrality - West Sussex County Council](#)



Update: RTPI Update

Policy Consultations

RTPI Scotland have submitted responses to the following consultations and requests for written evidence:

- Written Evidence for the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee regarding LURB Part 5.
- Response to 'Land Reform in a Net Zero Nation'.
- Response to Revised Draft National Planning Framework 4.
- Response to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.
- Response to the Future of National Parks in Scotland Consultation.

Consultations currently under consideration are:

- Cycling framework for active travel. Deadline 19th December
- Skills delivery independent review: call for evidence. Deadline 23rd December
- Community Planning - call for views. Deadline 13th January
- Consultation for Scotland's new historic environment strategy. Deadline 20th February

Parliament

- The Policy, Practice and Research Officer provided oral evidence to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill Part 5 on 4 Oct.
- The Director provided oral evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee regarding the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill Part 3 on 25 Oct.
- The Policy, Practice and Research Officer provided oral evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee regarding the revised draft NPF4 on 22 Nov.

Apprenticeships

We continue to take forward work aimed at promoting a planning apprenticeship programme. A business case is in development detailing:

- the context, outlining current routes in the profession and information on Scotland's Apprenticeship Programmes
- details on the need and demand for planners, including metrics on Scotland's planning workforce, meeting replacement and expansion demand, scoping supply-side, testimonials and demand from planning authorities, key agencies and planning consultants
- experience and lessons learned from planning apprenticeships on England

This will be shared with Scottish Government in December to support the case for a planning apprenticeship programme being developed in Scotland.

Digital Planning

RTPI Scotland has been commissioned by Scottish Government to develop a digital planning skills and capabilities programme. This comprises a Skills Development Programme, a Knowledge Transfer Programme, Champions and Innovation Programme and a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the programme.

A new Programme Manager has started in post in September and an Advisory Group has been established and one meeting has been held. It is anticipated that the Advisory Group will meet 3 times over the coming 12 months. The original aim was for the programme to have been delivered by the end of March 2023.

This has now been recast to September 2023. We are working with Scottish Government on a reprofiling of the programme and timescales for the finalisation of each of the outputs.

In terms of the individual projects that are part of the programme:

- After a tendering exercise Ekos have appointed to undertake the deep dive research and co-design of the skills programme. This project has now started.
- An invitation to Tender has been issued for the Online Good Practice Portal. It is planned that is completed by May 2023.
- We are exploring options on the development of a Skills Diagnostic Tool to ascertain if there are exiting resources of this type that can be adapted to work within a planning context.
- We will look to tender the Introduction to Digital Planning Handbook in the new year.
- We plan to discuss the Champions and Disrupter networks with key stakeholder before proceeding. These include Scottish Government, the Scottish Young Planners' Network, Heads of Planning Scotland and the Improvement Service.

Media

The following news releases have been published

- The RTPI would like to congratulate Robert Salter FRTPI and Justin Wickersham FRTPI on being elected Fellows of the Institute
- RTPI Scotland has hailed the publication of the finalised National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 as a significant milestone in ambitions to tackle climate change.

Social Media

The @RTPIScotland Twitter account has 4886 followers and the @ConvenorRTPI account has 1646. ■



Update: Scottish Government

It has been a very significant period for the reform of our planning system and for the work of the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division; perhaps most notably with the recent progress on Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework. Here we give an update on that and on other news and activity over recent weeks, and point to what you can expect to see soon.

National Planning Framework 4

We marked World Town Planning Day by laying the [revised draft National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) before the Scottish Parliament for approval. This takes us a big step closer to the end of an ambitious journey to prepare NPF4, beginning with a Call for Ideas in early 2020, followed by a Position Statement in November 2020 and the publication of the draft NPF4 in November 2021.

This significant period of preparation represents the extensive consultation and engagement which has been undertaken to inform NPF4, but also reflects the complex

and challenging issues involved and the attention which we have given, throughout this process, to carefully consider the views expressed.

Accompanying the revised draft NPF4 is an Explanatory Report which sets out the changes made in response to consultation, as well as a Delivery Programme which will be updated throughout the lifetime of NPF4 and includes key actions which will support its delivery.

It is now a matter for the Scottish Parliament to consider the revised draft NPF4, prior to a vote on its approval. Should the Scottish Parliament approve NPF4, the Scottish Government will progress towards its

adoption and publication, at which point we will commence the relevant provisions in the 2019 Planning Act so that NPF4 will become part of the statutory development plan.

Planning Reform Programme

With the draft finalised NPF4 and policy handbook content refined and clarified, we are working to finalise the regulations and guidance on local development plans (LDPs). We expect finalised versions to come into force shortly after NPF4 is adopted.

[Individual responses](#) to the LDP consultation are available and we have also published an [independent analysis](#).

Over the summer, we consulted on the second phase of our permitted development rights (PDR) review programme. The [Phase 2 consultation](#) proposed new and extended PDR – as well as changes to the use classes order (UCO) – to help support: the rollout of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; the resilience and recovery of city, town and local centres; and operational development at ports. We have been giving careful consideration to the consultation responses and are currently working through options. Regulations bringing the changes into effect will be laid in the Scottish Parliament at the earliest opportunity.

A [letter from the Chief Planner and the Planning Minister](#) in October 2022 confirmed that consideration of new PDR for domestic and non-domestic renewables equipment, including solar panels, would be brought forward to Phase 3 of the review – which is scheduled to be consulted on early in 2023.

New pre-application consultation (PAC) requirements came into force on 1 October 2022, as did Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provisions which relate to the duration of planning permission, completion notices and repeat applications. We published a revised [Development Management Circular \(Circular 3/2022\)](#) on 21 October.

We are working with the High Level Group on Planning Performance to drive forward a number of workstreams to enhance resources and skills, and to promote a highly performing system which can deliver on the ambitions for planning set out in NPF4. The High Level Group is currently progressing work on: the Future Planners project proposals to help increase the number of people entering the planning profession; exploring how planning fees can better reflect the costs involved in determining applications to achieve cost recovery; the introduction of mandatory training for elected members in the planning system, and the appointment of a planning improvement coordinator for Scotland.

Place Standard Tool

A range of new Place Standard tool resources have been launched this year, and October saw an updated and improved version of the tool go live. The [revised tool](#) has been embedded within the [Our Place website](#) and contains enhanced functionality, content and appearance, providing an improved method of engaging with people on the quality of their local place.

The [Place Standard with a Climate Lens](#) was also launched during Scotland's Climate Week in September. Designed to be used alongside the updated Place Standard tool, the Climate Lens contains new resources to support place-based conversations to go into greater depth around climate issues. The resources are designed to help develop understanding how climate change might play out in a local area, enabling a more informed and holistic approach to adaptation, the move to net zero and just transition.

Digital Planning

The Digital Transformation of Planning Programme is progressing well through year 2 of delivery, focussing on key priorities that will provide tangible benefits. The team is working with three planning authority partners on development of a single payment system that will provide an improved user experience and added functionality to those paying for planning or building applications, and a more efficient process for planning authorities. These partners, Stirling Council, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority and Glasgow City Council, will work with the Scottish Government team and selected supplier to develop, build and test a new solution. Rollout of the new payment solution is expected from Autumn 2023.

Other priorities include development of an overhauled digital application process for planning and building consents which will replace the current eDevelopment.scot application service. Work is progressing with consultants to develop the new application service that uses data to help guide applicants through the process, improve the quality of applications and address limitations of the current eDevelopment service, for example batch uploads of documents. We expect rollout of the new application service to begin in Autumn 2024, and last approximately 6 months. Once complete, the eDevelopment service will be decommissioned.

To provide a home to the new digital services, work has begun on a gateway website to coordinate easy access to information and services on planning and building in Scotland. Contractors have been appointed to build a first version of this 'digital front door' and will work with stakeholders to design and develop this over the next six months.

Scottish Government preferred policy position on coal extraction

Following a call for evidence inviting stakeholders' views, the Scottish Government published its [preferred policy position on coal extraction](#) on 15 October, setting out that the Scottish Government does not support coal extraction in Scotland. This position supports our ambitious climate targets and a commitment to become net zero by 2045.

Staying in Touch

For the latest messages from the Planning, Architecture and Regeneration Division, follow us on Twitter [@ScotGovPlanning](#) and [@DigiPlanningSG](#) and register to receive our [Planning and Architecture news updates](#). ■



Update:

Planning Aid Scotland

At our recent AGM, we launched a new Mentoring Scheme. The scheme is designed to assist licentiate planners in gaining their chartered status (MRTPI) by partnering with experienced or retirement members who will supervise their advice case work for PAS. It is a great opportunity to advance your continuing professional development. The Mentoring Scheme has two target groups: experienced or retired planners with development management experience; and licentiate planners on their way to gaining chartered status.

We envisage that the casework will be predominantly householder applications. However, it may also include helping clients to formulate support or objections to neighbouring planning applications. There

will often be added complexities such as listed buildings and conservation areas.

The Advice Service team at PAS will identify those cases that come in each week which are suitable for licentiate members. These will be sent to you via your mentor. As part of a typical advice case, you may be asked to draft a piece of advice on something like whether planning permission would be required for a dwelling extension.

The role of the mentor is to ensure that the advice produced by the licentiate is accurate, sound and practical, and to provide support and feedback. Advice cases need to observe high professional standards and be submitted within the required time scales. As a licentiate, your mentor and the PAS Advice Service team are always here to support along the way.

What's the commitment? For a licentiate, we envisage you would be completing 2-3 cases per month, typically taking on no more than one case at a time. For the mentor we estimate 2 hours a week. As this is a new initiative we will be monitoring and reviewing the scheme based on feedback from our mentors and licentiates.

If you're interested to know more, either as a licentiate or as a mentor, visit our website www.pas.org.uk. ■

Update:

Heads of Planning Scotland

It has been a busy, and at the same time fulfilling, first few months in my role as Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland. Without the support of HoPS Secretariat (Trevor and Amy) and the HoPS Executive and Sub Committees, it would be a much more daunting task, in addition to the day job, so again my thanks to all. Also my thanks to Pam Ewen, our previous Chair, who was so active during the year in many areas, not least our outreach to other stakeholders in the Planning system.

We have submitted written evidence to Scottish Government Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill on Environmental Outcomes Reports, and I gave verbal evidence on Planning Data. With the

Vice Chairs, I meet monthly with the Chief Planner and her Team, where amongst other matters we have discussed: NPF4 timescale, Resourcing the Planning Service, UK Investment Zones, Elected Member Training, Scotwind, 20 minute neighbourhoods, emergency accommodation for Ukraine migrants, cost crisis, Planning Performance Coordinator – some of which have featured in the helpful Chief Planner letters. The Executive has agreed to the formation of a new Sub Committee on Digital Planning, with thanks to the members who have volunteered for that work. Consultations have been responded to on Onshore conventional oil and gas - call for evidence; Review of permitted development rights - phase 2 consultation; Environmental Standards Scotland - draft

strategic plan; Delivering Scotland's circular economy: A Route Map to 2025 and beyond ; Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2022 and others such as the Fee changes under the Electricity Act, National Parks and Effective Community Engagement.

We continue to engage with CoSLA at the Environment and Economy Board and the Scottish Government at the High Level Group. We are progressing actions looking at bringing more people into the planning profession, identified in the Future Planners report, along with Scottish Government, RTPI and the Planning Schools.

Jim Miller MRTPI, Chair of Heads of Planning Scotland ■

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