

Plan the Scotland We Need

A Manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament Election

OUR VISION

Covid-19 has brought into sharp focus the need to plan, prepare and provide a routemap for a different Scotland. We need to plan the world we need to:

- tackle the climate emergency and achieve Scotland's net zero carbon reduction targets
- reduce health inequalities across Scotland
- support a wellbeing economy
- ensure a quality and affordable home for everyone who needs one

In doing this there is a need to agree a new normal and how we achieve this. This needs to embed resilience into how our cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods function and develop over time. This should embrace risk in a more positive and constructive way. We believe that to make this change there is a need to undertake the following shifts:

- From short term thinking to long-, medium- and short- term thinking
- From having many overlapping and disjointed strategies to complementarity and integration
- From an opportunistic, reactive approach to development to a planned, proactive approach
- From economic priorities to holistic priorities covering environmental, social and economic issues
- From a competitive investment approach to one of managed investment
- From a deal-making approach to one based on providing a place vision first
- From short-term, project focussed investment to a planned long term holistic vision

Planning, planners and the planning system are vital if we want these outcomes and so RTPI Scotland is calling on the next Government to commit to the following.



PLAN FOR A GREEN ECONOMY

What – Agree and deliver a forward looking and ambitious 4th National Planning Framework with committed funding to help tackle the climate emergency and achieve net zero carbon targets, reduce health inequalities, support a wellbeing economy and ensure a quality and affordable home for everyone who needs one.

Why – Post Covid-19 there is an urgent need to plan, prepare and provide a route map for a different type of Scotland. Collectively we need a “new normal” and a clear vision how we can achieve this based upon an economy and society that focuses on delivering wellbeing, sustainability, and equity. NPF4 should have a key role to play in this through promoting real and positive change. In doing this it should:

- embed the new purpose of planning
- be supported by a capital investment programme
- be a “First Minister’s document”
- contain milestones that are tracked transparently
- prioritise climate action and tackling health inequalities
- promote active and sustainable travel
- embed the Reuse First Principle
- promote decision making based around the well-being of future generations.
- become The National Plan for Scotland

- embed and champion the Place Principle and Place Standard Themes

See our [10 Big Ideas for the 4th National Planning Framework](#)
See our [research paper on why we should Plan the World We Need](#)



CREATE PLACES FOR PEOPLE

What – Embed twenty minute neighbourhoods into decisions in policy, practice and investment

Why – Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of having well-designed, attractive, healthy and sustainable communities where people have local access to the services, shops and facilities they need on a daily basis. These “20 minute neighbourhoods” can also be the focus for the regeneration of our town and city centres where new housing is introduced to support services and shops that are found in them already.

The Place Principle supports collaborative place-based action and the Place Standard is a commonly-used tool to help people think about the quality of their place and where action might be required. If the Place Principle is to be effective there is a need to ‘give it teeth’ and operationalise its work so it influences policy, practice and investment on the ground. .

Research on the adoption of Scottish Planning Policy in Local Development Plans recommended greater emphasis on placemaking at the forefront of development and recognised a need for more direction in ensuring principles are implemented with planning policy becoming more prescriptive to ensure that placemaking principles are carried through to development management.

See our [10 Big Ideas for the 4th National Planning Framework](#)
See our [research paper on why we should Plan the World We Need](#)



INVEST IN PLANNING SERVICES

What – Address the under investment in the planning services across Scotland to create a world leading planning system through increasing planning fees and making sure they are used to support planning services

Why – The planning systems in Scotland sets the context for development and create the enabling conditions for a sustainable and healthy built environment. It shapes the environments where people work, live and interact. It can address potential negative impacts of development which can be harmful to human health. The planning system underpins economic, social, environmental and health outcomes across Scotland. Research undertaken by Vivid Economics and published by the RTPI, showed that in 2019 a total of 3100 affordable homes were provided through planning contributions in Scotland. This generated £184m through rent savings, jobs due to employment opportunities and healthcare savings from reduced homelessness. Planners protect, enhance and ensure the development of green spaces and the Vivid Economics research showed that these provide more than £240m in value per year for Scotland.

However, planning departments have faced the largest cuts in local government expenditure and since 2009/10 gross fund expenditure on planning has decreased by 25%. In real terms, budget has decreased by nearly 41%. Net revenue spend on development planning and processing planning applications in local authorities is only 0.38% of their total budget in 2019. We have seen 26% staffing cuts in planning departments since 2009. Our research has also estimated that the implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 could cost between £12.1m and £59.1m over a ten-year period. Research we have published

on the benefits of introducing a digital planning service in Scotland outlined key benefits over the next 10 years including:

- up to £200m generated in economic benefits directly to users of the planning system.
- up to 1,600 jobs in the construction and development sectors and their supply chains.
- up to £50.5m generated in economic benefits for the broader construction sector.
- avoidance of up to £23.7m of “Do Nothing costs” to the Scottish economy.

See our [trends in resourcing planning research briefing](#)
See our [benefits of investing in a digital planning service research paper](#)
See our [Invest and Prosper research paper](#)



SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE WHERE THEY LIVE

What – provide support for communities to develop Local Place Plans

Why - Local Place Plans were introduced by the 2019 Planning Act. They are an exciting new type of plan providing opportunities for communities to develop proposals and ideas for the development of where they live. They can help community planning and land-use planning achieve better outcomes for communities.

Local Place Plans are to be community led. They will be a key means of ensuring that communities are able to set out their ideas on what their places should look like in the future. This means that resources to support communities to access expertise and to engage with people in their area are vital to their success. However, there is currently no designated funding in place to support them to do this, although their success may well depend on this. Research RTPI Scotland undertook in 2019 estimated that each Local Place Plan could cost between £10,000 - £30,000 each.

See our [trends in resourcing planning research briefing](#)
See our research paper on [Financial Implications of Implementing the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)



INTEGRATE AND INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE

What - Establish an independent, specialist body to coordinate and provide strategic, upfront and long-term infrastructure advice to Scottish Government and to identify resources required for delivery.

Why – If we are increase the number, affordability and quality of homes whilst meeting net zero carbon targets, the next Government needs to prioritise infrastructure so that it can facilitate new energy efficient houses which are designed and located to achieve carbon neutrality. They must also be designed to help people have local access to the services, shops and facilities they need on a daily basis, so called 20 minute neighbourhoods. Planning can integrate this activity with interventions to regenerate deprived areas, creating new green spaces, improving access to jobs, services and amenities, attracting businesses, and supporting a resurgence of social and cultural activity.

The next Scottish Government must take a more active role to increase the number of quality homes built through prioritising its Capital Borrowing Powers to fund housing and infrastructure and by focussing resources particularly to areas of low demand to enable the provision of housing in areas of need of regeneration.

See our [research paper on why we should Plan the World We Need](#)



MEASURE PLANNING PERFORMANCE THROUGH OUTCOMES

What - Ensure the new Planning Improvement Coordinator is able to provide independent advice, is resourced adequately and introduces outcomes-based performance management.

Why - The National Planning Improvement Coordinator has the potential to strengthen the ability of the planning system to deliver on many of Scotland's priorities. RTPI Scotland believes the role should be a supportive one, acting as a critical friend to all those involved in planning. This means that the independence of the role, not just from local government but other users of the planning system, including the development industry and community interests, will be crucial to its success.

The Coordinator can play an important role in 'shifting the gaze' to measure the success of planning in terms of the quality of places and buildings delivered on the ground as well as quickly a planning application is processed. Research published by the RTPI "Measuring What Matters" has outlined the benefits of this.

See our [Measuring What Matters, Planning Outcomes research report](#)



INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PLANNERS TO SUPPORT RECOVERY

What – Introduce a planning apprenticeship and skills development programme.

Why - Research undertaken by EKOS consulting on planning skills, says that planning departments within the local authorities appear to be experiencing a challenging operating environment, with reducing budgets and headcount and increasing workloads. It outlines how and demographic and succession planning challenges across the sector mean that there is an estimated replacement demand of around 500 planners over the next 15 years.

It says that over the short to medium term the impacts of not investing in planners could negatively impact service delivery through planning authorities struggling to meet their statutory duties and the quality of service provided e.g. delays in processing applications, reduced income from planning fees and tax base and the potential costs of having to participate and respond to appeals. The research also states that longer term macro level effects of inaction could negatively impact upon the sector's ability to support delivery of a range of national policy priorities including tackling climate change, achieving net zero emissions by 2045 and meeting new housing targets. It concludes that there is a need to consider opportunities to adapt and enhance existing provision to develop vocational/ work-based learning programme or apprenticeship scheme to support talent development.

Partners in Planning, Skills Development Scotland and EKOS research report into Skills in Planning due for publication in February

RTPI Scotland

The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is the champion of planning and the planning profession. We work to promote the art and science of planning for the public benefit. We have around 2100 members in Scotland and a worldwide membership of over 25,000. RTPI Scotland's members represent both the public and private sector interests and will in large part be responsible for the successful delivery of the planning system.

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