

SPP Review - Priorities for Change

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Policy Ideas

The review is of the SPP as a whole – please consider connections and tensions between policy subjects

Policy Subject/s : sustainable development, waste management and renewable energy

What works?

What doesn't work?

Waste management policy (paragraphs 212-224) are in need of review.

Sustainable development: the section on sustainable development (34) appears somewhat disjointed from the subject policies.

National Planning Framework: the overlap and interface between (waste) policies contained in NPF and SPP is not entirely clear.

Why?

- a) Various paragraphs and policies in the waste management section are out of date,
- b) Few local plans contain adequate provision towards planning for waste management
- c) Existing SPP policies are ambiguous and remain open to varying interpretation

Whilst we need to understand the issues, we ask that comments focus on the possible solutions.

What changes and/or solutions could be made to the policy to focus it on sustainable economic growth and to emphasise place making?

Sustainable development: there is scope to better integrate the sustainable development section with the subject policies (rather than a 'stand alone' section at the front of SPP) thus making a stronger link between sustainable development and relevant to sector specific policies. For example, waste management infrastructure is clearly an essential component of sustainable development as it enables Scotland to meet its ambitious targets for recycling and renewable energy generation.

SPP should be explicitly clear: to assist Scotland in its transition to a low-carbon economy, planning

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authorities should not refuse permission for well designed infrastructure which promotes the Scottish Government's objectives for sustainable development.

Proximity principle (paragraph 213): a Reporters' decision (Carnbroe EfW) noted: "there has been little in the way of unambiguous advice on how the [proximity] principle should be applied in practice". Local authorities often interpret the proximity principle as managing waste within their own boundaries. Of course, modern waste management operations may require waste to cross administrative boundaries and SPP should be amended to ensure that the proximity principle is considered strategically. It is perfectly acceptable for waste arising in any location in Scotland to be treated in any waste management facility proposed elsewhere within Scotland or overseas.

The definition of the proximity principle in paragraph 213 is outdated, and should be replaced by an assessment of the disposal of waste at the *nearest appropriate facility*.

There is also an opportunity for the revised SPP to explicitly state that in interpreting the proximity principle, local authorities should refrain from imposing mileage limits on the haulage of waste to and from waste facilities (ie 'catchment boundaries')

Waste management provision through development plans (paragraph 215): few new style local development plans have been adopted, and there is little evidence of waste-specific site allocations.

The revised SPP should offer guidance to local authorities on the criteria used when preparing waste planning policies for inclusion within development plans. While industrial sites would be appropriate for most waste management development, this should not absolve local authorities from allocating (or safeguarding) *specific* waste sites.

We suggest that waste management infrastructure is identified in the revised SPP as a strategic priority for local development plans.

Waste management targets (paragraph 212): are out of date and need revising (eg – the now redundant 25% EfW cap).

Waste hierarchy (paragraph 213): needs updating. It should also be noted that the waste hierarchy is asserted in a relatively flexible manner in the Waste Framework Directive, in which it is entirely permissible to deviate from the hierarchy under environmental or economic circumstances.

Planning permitting interface (paragraph 220): could be improved by clarifying that potential environmental impacts could be deemed by a planning authority to be a material consideration. However, the weight applied to potential impacts should be reduced in so far as they are addressed and mitigated by SEPA in fulfilling its statutory duties.

Local authorities should be aware that refusal of a planning application on grounds of pollution control - and which would be addressed through SEPA's permitting process and inspection regime - may increase the potential for a successful appeal.