

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 : General Principles

What works?

One consolidated document which addresses topics in a succinct manner.

What doesn't work?

- 1) SPP needs to recognise NPF3 will be a statutory plan which expresses Scottish Government policy. It is necessary to define the role of each document, avoid repetition and two separate expressions of planning policy on a variety of topic areas. The documents should complement one another.
- 2) The document does not place sufficient emphasis on economic development and growth. In current economic circumstances it is important the encouragement of sustainable economic development underpins Scottish planning policy. This should be balanced in the revised version of the document.
- 3) There is an overlap between policy areas that are partially outwith planning (for example energy and ports and harbours) needs to be handled more effectively in revised SPP.

Why?

- 1) It is unhelpful to the planning process to have two documents whose purpose is confused or whose content is repeated.
- 2) The planning system should be used effectively to promote the right development in the right places, therefore SPP should achieve a better balance in promoting development and providing protection for important assets. The balance is currently focused in favour of protection at the expense of promoting economic growth and development. It should take into account the priorities set out in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy.
- 3) Planning policy is not fully aligned with energy and ports and harbours policy.

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

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

1) There is a need to consider the relationship between the NPF and SPP, as there is repetition and a degree of shared purpose between the two documents. NPF3 will be a Statutory plan and therefore is, of itself, an expression of Scottish Government planning policy. This layer of Statutory policy from the Scottish Government was not there when the original SPPs were drafted.

Each should have a clear, defined role and both documents must complement one another. There should not be two separate or overlapping expressions of Scottish Planning Policy from the Scottish Government. The role of SPP may be to produce defined and more detailed expressions of policy to achieve the objectives set out in NPF3.

2) The topic areas in SPP are broad and comprehensive, but the overall focus of the current document is more strongly towards protection of assets than the promotion of development. To achieve sustainable economic growth, there will be a need to consider how policy can be drafted to promote development in Scotland, whilst protecting interests of importance.

3) Planning overlaps with other consenting regimes, such as those for Electricity Act consents and Harbour Revision Orders. Planning policy and energy policy and planning policy and ports and harbours policy both need to be more closely aligned to ensure that the planning of infrastructure is comprehensive, evidence-based and takes due regard of the requirements of the relevant consenting regimes. This can be achieved though both NPF3 and the revised SPP.