

Scottish Women's Convention response to:

The Scottish Government:

Consultation on the National Planning Framework: Position Statement

February 2021

Introduction

The Position Statement sets out the Scottish Government's current thinking on the issues that will need to be addressed when preparing Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). It is expected that NPF4 will focus on achieving the following four key outcomes:

- Net Zero Emissions;
- Resilient Communities;
- A Wellbeing Economy; and
- Better, Greener Places.

The Position Statement considers these outcomes in turn and sets out in more detail the main issues raised during early engagement; emerging thinking on spatial priorities; and the potential changes to national planning policies that are being considered. The Scottish Government welcome thoughts on the Statement, with more detailed consultation expected to occur in Autumn, 2021.

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC)

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy. The SWC uses the views of women to respond to a variety of Parliamentary, Governmental and organisational consultation papers at both a Scottish and UK level.

The Scottish Women's Convention engages with women using numerous communication channels including Roadshow events, Thematic Conferences and regional contact groups. This submission provides the views of women and reflects their opinions and experiences in a number of key areas relevant to women's equality.

Do you agree with our current thinking on planning for net-zero emissions?

Women in consultation with the SWC tend to agree with the proposed strategies in working towards net-zero emissions and finding innovative solutions that make the most of Scotland's unique resources and potential as a green space. This should foster collaboration in consultation with women's own expertise in relation to their communities and climate change. Recommendations taken forward should be informed by refreshed updates that seek to map out progress on an ongoing basis and include:

- Using climate change policies as a positive opportunity to further equalities and bridge the gap of socio-economic inequalities, particularly relating to the areas of health, housing and employment.
- A further emphasis on community driven work that incorporates local organisations into planning for net-zero emissions to provide the most effective action plans at a local level.
- Recognition of the gendered impact of climate change, ensuring planning and subsequent recommendations are both green and recognised as opportunities for equality.

Do you agree with our current thinking on planning for resilient communities?

Yes. The SWC has heard from numerous women advocating the positives of strengthening resilient communities, particularly around concepts such as 20-minute neighbourhoods. Tying the standards within the NPF4 Position Statement to other policy visions such as The Scottish Government: 'Housing to 2040' approach can ensure such planning remains relevant in a way that emphasises equality and sustainability. Moving forward with a dedicated infrastructure-first objective to ensure fair access to services is to be commended, particularly with this being tied in with other priorities for equality, including a focus on public health. These initiatives should seek to provide a clear strategy in how resilient community planning can work for women, including innovative solutions to barriers such as multiple caring responsibilities and the gender pay gap.

Do you agree with our current thinking on planning for a wellbeing economy?

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities within society at a national and local level. This is set to be further impacted given the unpredictability of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union and the unknown effect of this on differing sectors and groups within Scotland. The economic response to such issues should include a

high-level gendered analysis towards income inequality, intersectional discrimination and the consequences of such for women in the years to come.

Taking forth an emphasis on a wellbeing economy that prioritises equality and inclusion as much as economic analysis is seen as overwhelmingly positive. Many women have vocalised to the SWC that the ways in which our economy has continued to work over the years does not benefit the majority within Scotland – particularly those from lower socio-economic areas or with intersectional characteristics. It is hoped that moving forward with the emphasis on a proactive wellbeing economic approach can provide solutions that ensure positive outcomes for all, rather than simply being reactive to issues and include:

- A reliance on a variety of flexible approaches and real lived experience alongside a focus on both quantitative and qualitative data gathering to measure effectiveness.
- Incorporating analysis of the gender pay gap, women's representation and equal opportunities within all strategic planning at both national and local levels for the wellbeing economy.
- Placing mental health and wellbeing at the heart of economic strategies to emphasise that profitability in monetary terms is not the sole factor for Scotland's recovery.

Do you agree with our current thinking on planning for better, greener places?

Plans to develop and implement better, greener spaces throughout Scotland are met with positivity from women for the opportunities that can open up for local communities, both economically and socially. Emphasis should lie on using this planning for vacant land sites and buildings in a way that promotes sustainability and renewable sources of income for local regions whilst highlighting equality for all.

Women have particularly welcomed the commitment to stronger and updated policy statements in reference to planning for such localities, including an emphasis on rural spaces. This is crucial in order to promote sustainable development of specific areas such as towns and city centres in light of what the pandemic and subsequent lockdown has meant for these particular places. Such plans should account for:

- A collaborative approach throughout the planning and implementation process that includes local business, the public and third sector.
- An increase in localised budgetary allocations that can work to actively highlight the unique localities of certain areas and use citizen participation to formulate and implement ideas regarding this.
- Using such opportunities as part of solutions in alleviating the climate crisis.
- Involvement of local communities when designing such places to encourage use of green spaces and regeneration of land and buildings for sustainable means.

Do you have further suggestions on how we can deliver our strategy?

Many of the current priorities put forth within the refreshed National Planning Statement align with issues raised by women to the SWC, particularly in collaboration with other Scottish Government policy commitments including public health and digital connectivity. Going forward, this should be highlighted to illustrate how delivery of the strategy can work to achieve outcomes across Government and Ministerial Portfolios. In achieving the objectives set out within the Position Statement, clear emphasis should be given to the need for:

- Support for local communities to continue regeneration and infrastructure planning and investment, including the creation of opportunities for innovative delivery of such objectives.
- Further emphasis on the use of detailed impact assessments within the planning process, including greater and more collaborative use of Equality Impact Assessments with other assessment methods.
- Planning for robust and detailed data gathering as to the impacts of delivering such strategies, including the effect on underrepresented groups.
- The implementation of accessible frameworks for women into decision making roles within the planning process and advisory stages to ensure that women's voices are heard and acted upon.
- Accounting for the need to disseminate information widely and in a variety of formats to account for all citizen's needs and requirements.
- Detailed consultation with representative samples of local populations that includes individuals with protected characteristics as well as others less likely to engage with statutory services to understand local issues that may have been overlooked.

Conclusion

The SWC is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's Consultation on the National Planning Framework: Position Statement. As an organisation, we will continue to work with women from across Scotland to gather voices and experiences relating to equality at both a reserved and devolved level.

For further information, please contact
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