



## **20-Minute Neighbourhood Extracts**

### **Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee draft NPF4 response 30/03/22**

<https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/LGHP/2022/3/30/06f7ad35-d92e-4558-ab1b-d94d9ef6c230-1#3d8e7871-9e32-4c97-b2d8-4b173c733f32.dita>

The Committee welcomes 20 minute neighbourhoods and notes that stakeholders recognise this as a good planning concept. There are undoubtedly, however, very significant challenges associated with delivering on 20 minute neighbourhoods. Whether it's a new development, an existing urban setting or rural or island context careful consideration will need to be given to how it can be applied in each context.

Communities will need to be involved in shaping the places in which they are to live and amongst other things, there will need to be a focus on infrastructure and sustainable transport to deliver on these ambitions. The Committee welcomes the Minister's recognition of the importance of STPR2 in delivering on 20 minute neighbourhoods, but would welcome further information from the Scottish Government on how it intends to deliver on 20 minute neighbourhoods across Scotland and in particular in rural and island areas where the challenges of creating 20 minute neighbourhoods would appear to be most pronounced.

The Committee recognises a need for flexibility to some extent, but is not convinced that as it currently stands NPF4 strikes the right balance. The Committee will return later in this report to look at some of these concepts, but in more general terms the Committee asks the Scottish Government to look again at terms such as "community wealth building" and "20 minute neighbourhoods" to consider whether these are sufficiently well defined. In the absence of that clarity there is a risk that NPF4 does not deliver on its ambitions and that planning decisions are made which run contrary to the ambitions of NPF4.

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### **Town Centre Action Plan Review – Joint response from Scottish Government and COSLA – 13/04/22**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/town-centre-action-plan-review-joint-scottish-government-cosla-response/pages/1/>

12.Ensure NPF4 supports local living through its strategy based on spatial principles, including compact growth, local living and just transition. This will be supported by a more directive approach to where new development should take place, with new policies to proactively support and encourage opportunities for town centre living. Planning policies will focus on brownfield development, reusing vacant and derelict land and repurposing existing properties, locating homes closer to services and facilities and supporting 20 minute neighbourhoods.

13.Deliver more town centre living via Housing 2040<sup>10</sup> by: investing in a rolling programme of demonstrator locations, providing expertise, resources and matched funding to help illustrate what future Town Centre Living and 20 minute neighbourhood models can look like.

26.Harness the momentum that has been building around 20 Minute Neighbourhoods to support the town centre vision. Learning from the actions and interventions of early adopters, we will research and address the challenges and concerns around delivery across settlement patterns and show how policy and investment levers and initiatives can be brought together to support delivery using the Place Principle and place based approaches.

## **Scottish Parliament Debate NPF4 19/04/22**

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-19-04-2022?meeting=13694&iob=124246>

### **Gillian Martin MSP**

Our committee welcomes the efforts to promote the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the health and wellbeing benefits that they could bring. However, we need to be clearer about the objective that underlies that concept. Witnesses who gave evidence to our committee argued strongly for a flexible approach that recognises the huge variation in different communities and neighbourhoods across Scotland, not least rural communities. In essence, 20-minute neighbourhoods are about improving the quality of access to key local services, and that concept can be applied equally to neighbourhoods in central Aberdeen, Dundee or Glasgow and to those in rural parts of Aberdeenshire, the Highlands or the Borders. Dr Matt Lowther from Public Health Scotland told the committee that

“we should not get too hung up on the 20-minute aspect.”—[Official Report, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, 25 January 2022; c 43.]

### **Graeme Dey MSP**

Then there is the issue of what terms such as “community wealth building” and—especially—“20-minute neighbourhoods” mean in rural settings. The committee also heard concerns about the definition of “out-of-town locations”. Clarity of a sort is needed on those terms not only for planners and developers but, to be frank, for the wider public, some of whom—let us face it—will wonder what on earth “community wealth building” means.

### **Graham Simpson MSP**

We have heard the word “clarity” used time and time again. The previous speaker, Graeme Dey, spoke about the woolly phrases that crop up throughout the document. We are both former journalists and that grates; when phrases such as “community engagement” and “20-minute neighbourhoods” are used, we have to ask what on earth they mean.

### **Mark Ruskell MSP**

Twenty-minute neighbourhoods are a case in point, because they should set a new standard for localisation where travel is minimised, people can meet more of their everyday needs locally, and our high streets are regenerated. There should be a benchmark for new developments, but we are already seeing major housing growth areas, such as in Scone, being built with minimal up-front

investment in essential services, which builds in car dependency from day 1. We are still seeing multimillion-pound proposals for car-dependent out-of-town retail centres being approved by many local councils, such as the controversial Asda development in Stirling. That has to change. Twenty-minute neighbourhoods must mark the start of relocation that is driven by the needs of communities rather than the whim of developers.

### **Meghan Gallacher MSP**

Four minutes is not a long time in which to reflect on weeks of evidence and the content of the NPF4 document, but I will mention one other area before I draw my remarks to a close. That is the issue of 20-minute neighbourhoods, which was one of the many issues on which I focused when asking questions in committee. More work is needed to define the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood and what that would mean for our rural areas in particular. Those areas lack transport infrastructure, which would need to be significantly improved to enable the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood even to be considered. I feel that the idea is intended more for urban areas, but we cannot cut off our rural areas, which are in desperate need of investment. I believe that that idea needs to be expanded, and I would be grateful if the minister could reflect on and outline how rural parts of Scotland could implement 20-minute neighbourhoods, particularly in relation to building local circular economies.

### **Alasdair Allan MSP**

One item that I want to focus on briefly is the place that is given to spatial strategy in NPF4 and how this Parliament will need to shape that as a concept. I think particularly of spatial strategy as it applies in rural areas, where, as others have mentioned, the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods will need to be imagined slightly differently for obvious reasons.

We will need to develop those concepts as we go, to counteract and not contribute to the tendencies towards the centralisation of population in a few rural centres, away from our more fragile communities, as has happened over the past few decades. It is good to see the focus that NPF4 puts on rural-proofing planning goals in rural areas.

### **Willie Coffey MSP**

First, the committee welcomes the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods, and we note that stakeholders recognise it as a good planning concept. Undoubtedly, however, significant challenges are associated with delivering on 20-minute neighbourhoods. Whether it concerns a new development to an existing urban setting, or is in a rural or island context, careful consideration will need to be given to what a 20-minute neighbourhood means and how it can be achieved in specific cases. Many members mentioned that. Communities will need to be involved in shaping the places in which they are to live.

Among other things, a focus will be needed on infrastructure and sustainable transport to deliver on those ambitions. The committee welcomed the minister's recognition of the importance of STPR2 in delivering on 20-minute neighbourhoods. However, we would welcome in the final version of NPF4 further information from the Scottish Government on how it intends to deliver on 20-minute neighbourhoods across Scotland, particularly in our rural and island areas, in which the challenges of creating 20-minute neighbourhoods appear to be most pronounced.