

Press Release

For immediate release

Environment groups broadly welcome Government planning blueprints

The Scottish Government has today set out its proposed vision for how Scotland should be developed over the next 20-25 years. It has published two key documents for consultation. The first, the "Main Issues Report" for Scotland's third National Planning Framework sets out a range of options for how different parts of Scotland could develop while the second, a draft Scottish Planning Policy, includes planning policies on specific topics such as the environmental protection, housing and renewable energy.

The Scottish Government is encouraging organisations and members of the public to respond with comments before Tuesday 23 July 2013.

These two important documents will have a major influence over whether individual projects can or can not go ahead as they will need to be taken into account by planning authorities when they make planning decisions.

The last National Planning Framework, published in 2009, included a number of controversial proposals including new electricity grid upgrades and a new coal fired power station at Hunterston in Ayrshire, which attracted over 20,000 objections before it was eventually abandoned by the developer.

Scottish Environment LINK has welcomed a number of measures put forward, in particular, the downgrading of support for onshore unconventional gas extraction, including controversial techniques such as fracking, continued support for a Central Scotland Green Network and support for a new national cycling and walking network.

We are disappointed that the Scottish Government still give so much emphasis to short-term economic growth. This must not be at the expense of our environmental assets and long-term sustainable development. It is also disappointing that there is no proposal for new national parks.

Aedán Smith, Convener of the Scottish Environment LINK Planning Task Force said "We support a strong planning system that protects Scotland's environment. These proposed planning documents from Government are generally positive. Continued support for green measures such a central Scotland Green Network and a new national cycling and walking network are particularly welcome. However, there also some potentially damaging proposals, such as upgrades at harbours and airports, which will require very close scrutiny."

Contact details

Aedán Smith, Convener of the LINK Planning Taskforce,
Head of Planning , RSPB Scotland
0131 317 4100/07595 654927 aedan.smith@rspb.org.uk
or the LINK Parliamentary Officer, Andy Myles
on 0131 225 4345 or via email on andy@scotlink.org

Editors' Notes

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 30 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

www.scotlink.org

(2) The National Planning Framework 3 Main Issues Report and draft Scottish Planning Policy is available here : <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/NPF3-SPP-Review> and consultation closes on Tuesday 23 July 2013.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

Registered HQ office: 2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road, Perth PH2 8BD tel 01738 630804 email enquiries@scotlink.org
Parliamentary office: 3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT tel 0131 225 4345 email parliamentary@scotlink.org