

PLACES, PEOPLE AND PLANNING – A POSITION STATEMENT: CONSULTATION RESPONSE

AUGUST 2017

1. Do you have any views on the proposals contained within the position statement?

PAS (www.pas.org.uk) is an independent organisation that helps people in Scotland engage with the planning system and the places around them. Engagement is a key aspect of enhancing local democracy and empowering communities to ensure that Scotland is a fairer and more equal place. PAS provides impartial advice, training, education programmes, facilitation, mediation and charrettes/community visioning.

PAS welcomes the opportunity to make further comments on the Position Statement: Places, people and planning Position and the Scottish Government's evolving proposals for reforming Scotland's planning system.

The Position Statement progresses the Scottish Government's high-level aims for the planning system, in particular, **the crucial stronger links between spatial planning and community planning**, a renewed approach to regional planning, and the opportunity for community groups to prepare their own local place plans. It is clear that none of this will be achieved without a clear and ongoing **commitment to culture change** within the planning system.

It is imperative that the on-going reform of Scotland's planning system – a system with its roots in promoting health and social justice - progresses in a manner that is interconnected with the aims of the current Scottish Government consultation on the Socio-Economic Duty.

PAS remains strongly committed to the aspiration of achieving better engagement of young people in the planning system in terms of bringing forward a new generation of committed and active citizens (whilst also remaining very much aware of the need to include other seldom heard groups).

The high-level aims set out in the Position Statement combine with a series of procedural measures aimed at increasing trust in the planning system as well as efficiency and better outcomes. PAS would note, however, that the Position Statement has not set out the required further detail of how many of the new procedures will operate.

PAS would like to comment further on the following proposals as set out in the Position Statement:

- 1. Aligning community planning and spatial planning:** PAS strongly supports the statutory link as set out as a fundamental point underpinning the planning reform

process. A requirement for Local Development Plans to be signed off by Chief Executives is likely to help address the requirement to align spatial planning and community planning. However, over and above this, significant culture change, guidance and the sharing of good practice will be required. PAS would also suggest that planning authorities could be required to demonstrate in their development plan schemes how spatial planning and community planning will be aligned.

2. **Regional partnership working:** It is essential that appropriate opportunities for individuals and community groups to engage at regional level are retained, and that transparency in how regional partnership working is carried out is promoted. There is a perception that it is harder to engage communities at regional level but this does not mean that it should not be aspired to. PAS's engagement project delivered on behalf of TAYplan demonstrated that public involvement including young people can be achieved if sufficient time and preparation is allocated.
3. **Stronger development plans:** PAS believes that a 10 year local development plan process will allow a greater focus on delivery, and importantly, more time for frontloading (including community engagement) and wider discussion. The key factor is that a set deadline is in place by which local development plans must be renewed, and that clear guidance is set out by the Scottish Government on factors which should trigger local development plans to be reviewed. With regard to supplementary guidance, PAS remains of the view that there is a role for this to be adopted as part of the Local Development Plan but perhaps only with regard to certain pre-defined topics.
6. **Giving people and opportunity to plan their own place:** PAS continues to support this proposal, however, it is clear that much more detail about how this will work legislatively is required. For example, what are the precise meanings of phrases such as being "consistent with" and being "incorporated" into the local development plan? And how will local place plans be aligned with community planning, or will it be the case that they could be instigated out of engagement around preparation of local outcomes improvement plans? PAS supports the idea of aligning the next Charrette mainstreaming funding to the preparation of local development plans, and would be interested in being involved in further research on this matter.
7. **Getting more people involved in planning:** The position statement remains relatively thin in detail and content on this fundamental matter. PAS would suggest that there should be a duty for local authorities to prepare a plan setting out how they will upskill community councils, individuals and other community groups to engage with the planning system, and also consider how they can establish new community councils in areas with no coverage. With regard to youth engagement, PAS would also like to see a requirement to set out in development plan schemes how this will be achieved.
12. **Releasing more development ready land for housing:** The report of the independent review and the Places, people and planning consultation placed a strong emphasis on delivery of more diverse housing models in Scotland. This message seems weaker in the Position Statement and the final sentence in this

section provides no detail on how a more diverse range of housing will be achieved. It would be useful for further research and guidance as to how this will be achieved to be undertaken.

14. Creating a fairer and more transparent approach to funding infrastructure:

PAS notes that the question of how the planning system captures rises in land value is – fundamentally - not addressed in the Position Statement. It is hoped that in the future this matter will be addressed.

16. Developing skills to deliver outcomes, and 4: Stronger Local Development Plans – with regard to Mediation:

PAS believes that mediation has strong potential to enhance all aspects of Scotland's planning system and should have a key role in the development planning process, including the proposed gatecheck stage. While it is welcome that the Position Statement proposes further research and guidance, PAS would urge the Scottish Government to consider going further and pilot action-based projects to use mediation within the planning system.

CONTACTS

PAS would be pleased to respond to any queries with regard to this response.



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