

Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) is an umbrella body for organisations working in the built environment in Scotland. Drawing on extensive expertise in a membership-led forum, BEFS informs, debates and advocates on the strategic issues, opportunities and challenges facing Scotland’s historic and contemporary built environment. BEFS is a supporting member of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

Other relevant consultation responses from BEFS can be seen below, as many issues overlap and demand associative consideration:

- **DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 (NPF4) CONSULTATION (31/03/2022)**

In forming this response BEFS received detailed views from Members both in writing and through a roundtable discussion.

Whilst BEFS notes general support for the consultation and the development of NPF4 as a broad and open process, some concern is felt that oversimplification has resulted in omissions – notably the clear list of benefits that the historic environment delivers, somewhat to the detriment of the historic environment’s representation as a national asset across planning and infrastructure.

BEFS Member responses can be found here: [RTPI Scotland](#), [Society of Antiquaries of Scotland](#), [SURF](#)

Historic Environment Scotland’s response can be found [here](#).

BEFS acts as Secretariat to the [Conservation Officers Group](#) (COG). Their response can be found [here](#).

- **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING – REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE CONSULTATION (31/03/2022)**

BEFS recognises the draft Local Development Plan Regulations and Guidance’s clear aims at interconnectivity, clarity around policy landscape and a holistic approach. The guidance would benefit from greater consistency throughout, but the focus on re-use, infrastructure and read across to NPF4 and Scotland’s National Performance Framework (lacking in NPF4) is welcome.

BEFS will be responding only to relevant questions of the consultation on effective community engagement in local development planning guidance, reflecting BEFS remit and Members’ interests, as below:

BEFS welcomes this specific guidance on effective community engagement in local development planning, for communities and local authorities. We recognise that this consultation follows the relatively recent adoption of the National Planning Framework 4 and associated Local Development Planning Guidance, and support all moves towards clarity on how planning authorities can comply with their legal duties to engage with the public when preparing their local development plans. BEFS is pleased to see the intention to signpost well established resources, such as Our Place and the Place Standard Tool and notes that this guidance does not replace - but sits alongside - existing Scottish government policy and guidance on community engagement such as Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement.

1. Do you agree that the purpose and scope of the guidance is clear?

Yes

However, questions around delivery – in particular around capacity of local planning authorities’ duties regarding monitoring and reporting - remain.

2. Do you agree that the terms inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower, as described in the table, are helpful terms to support understanding of different levels of engagement and the influence that results from it?

Yes

3. Do you agree that the appropriate levels of engagement have been identified for the stages of local development plan preparation?

Yes

BEFS welcomes the setting out of the stages, particularly useful for communities – we know that an understanding of the planning process, for example how and when to get involved, can provide barriers to effective participation. However, for this to be successful and for engagement to be meaningful across diverse communities, with varying resources at their disposal, this information must be clearly disseminated, and local authorities further supported with additional capacity and resources to do so. An example of this can be seen in the implementation of the – very welcome – expectation, set out in section 2.20 that *‘reporting mechanisms set out in legislation mean that people are given feedback on how their input has affected the approach taken’*. Members have questioned how this would work in practise – will there be any supported way of monitoring impact of input by communities, not only at the draft LDP stage but also subsequently? For example:

- Should an application for development be made at a later date, that does not represent the views or identified use in the LPP - how will this be addressed?
- Who will be consulted if a previous special purpose group has disbanded?

BEFS considers the Stages of Engagement to be clearly laid out and supports the spirit of the guidance, whilst noting that each of the stages bring with it additional demands and reporting pressures for local authorities, at a time where planning departments are seeing cuts and overall capacity and resource is stretched. The message is good, however clarity on how this will be implemented and supported would be welcome. Similarly, community groups will have varying resource, capacity, expertise and funding at their disposal.

BEFS would here reiterate comments made previously in relation to LDPs that:

‘Members expressed some reservations around how Local Development Plans and Local Place Plans will feed into each other, as well as the concern that Local Place Plans will self-select, in that only well informed and resourced communities will be able to prepare these, primarily to prevent development. One of the first things communities will want is access to up to date information from the Local Planning Authority, which may not (yet) exist. Do communities need to be resourced to be able to do this? This echoes ongoing conversations, also pertinent in relation to NPF4.

Currently, a Local Place Plan is required to be registered however the draft states that in LDP’s non-registered plans can be given due weight – the aim for inclusivity and a desire to recognise local and

community aims and aspirations for their places here is felt to be admirable; it does however raise the question, if this is the case, then what is the benefit of registering any local plans?’

4. Do you agree that the appropriate levels of engagement have been identified for the impact assessments?

No view

5. Overall, is the approach set out in the guidance helpful?

Yes

The approach to the guidance is an inclusive one and BEFS welcomes the aspirations for transparency of process. To further achieve clarity in this area, and to ensure that all communities and stakeholders are fully able to engage, a visual timeline to further illustrate at what point and how communities can engage within the planning process would be helpful.

6. Do you have any views about the initial conclusions of the impact assessments that accompany and inform this guidance?

No view

7. Thinking about the potential impacts of the guidance – will these help to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, and foster good community relations, in particular for people with protected characteristics?

No view

8. Do you have evidence that can further inform the impact assessments that accompany this guidance, in particular in relation to the impact of the guidance on people with protected characteristics, businesses and costs to businesses?

No view

9. Please provide any further comments on the guidance set out in this consultation.

Please provide your comments here.

BEFS considers further comments from discussions with Members as relevant to this consultation, and as such merit inclusion:

- Smaller, regional organisations and development trusts could struggle with the capacity to respond to consultations and as such the introductory statement that *‘The guidance will support*

opportunities to avoid or reduce consultation fatigue through linking processes where appropriate' is welcome.

- A local group or development trust may not be an institution, it may be run by volunteers, with no full-time equivalent staffing. There are concerns that SG thinking on funding and capacity assumes employees, who have the capacity both to bid for cash and then deliver the project.

BEFS responses to a number of Consultations in relation to the Built Environment can be found at:

<https://www.befs.org.uk/resources/consultations/>

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference: **Publish response with name**

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise? **YES**

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy. **I CONSENT**