




From policy to practice:

The journey to meaningful community engagement

Johanna Boyd, Chief Executive, Planning Aid Scotland

An aerial photograph of a residential housing estate. The houses are arranged in a grid-like pattern with a central green space. The houses are two-story brick buildings with white window frames and doors. There are several cars parked on the roads and in the central area. The overall scene is a typical suburban housing development.

**Inclusivity and Creativity in
Community Engagement:
A PfE Perspective**
23 November 2023

Outline



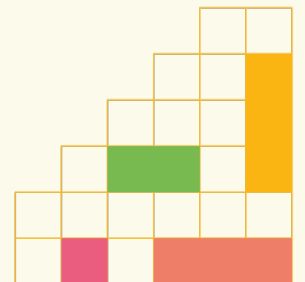
i Introduction to Planning Aid Scotland

hand **Setting the Scene**
Community engagement framework
Best practice

Q **Case Studies**
Examples of inclusive and creative community engagement

head with question mark **Q&A**

Helping Scotland navigate the planning system for over 30 years





Vision

An inclusive society where communities are at the heart of decision-making about their places.



Mission

To help people navigate the planning system and shape the future of their places.

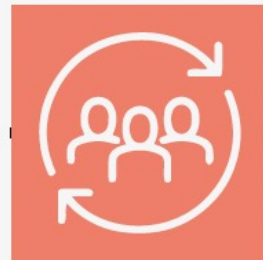
Values

Integrity • Impartiality • Collaboration • Participation • Inclusion

Strategic Priorities 2022-25



To advocate for **inclusive participation**



To mainstream **community-led planning**



To address the **climate emergency**



To develop as a **learning organisation**



What We Do: Planning Advice

Our original and flagship service.

- Free advice on any planning matter
 - Used by Community Councils, community groups, business start-ups and individuals
-
- ✓ **Independent and impartial**
 - ✓ **Confidential**
 - ✓ **Advice from chartered planners**
 - ✓ **Volunteer-led**
 - ✓ **Facilitating approach**

For more info [click here](#)



“I am so glad I contacted you and did not expect such a personal service.”

“You are running a wonderful and much needed service – thank you.”



What We Do: Training



For Community Councils, Elected Members, stakeholder groups, planners, and our Volunteers.

Focusing on:

- Understanding planning and how to get involved
- Community engagement and facilitation skills, and much more
- Bespoke approach
- Delivered by chartered planners



“Totally brilliant [...] interesting, invigorating and instilled confidence in tackling planning matters as a Community Councillor.”

For more info [click here](#)

What We Do: Community Engagement



Our approach to community engagement puts communities at the heart of the decision-making process.

- We have worked all over Scotland on community engagement and place-based projects.
- With our impartial outsider perspective and our commitment to all voices being heard, we help communities to have open and inclusive conversations, unlock ideas and articulate their visions.



“...what a fantastic and impressive service Planning Aid Scotland are providing for the community here. It’s making us all feel listened to and the whole process feel very smooth and easy.”

For more info [click here](#)

What We Do: Community Led Plans



Community-led plans

Spatial focus



Local Place Plans

Wider
placemaking focus



Community Action Plans



For more info [click here](#)



What We Do: Policy



Responding to Scottish Government consultations with a focus on effective engagement and user experience.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Publication - Consultation paper

**Effective community engagement in local
development planning guidance:
consultation**

What We Do: Volunteering



Volunteering is at the heart of what we do.

- We are a volunteer-led organisation, with a network of 400+ specialist volunteers.
- Our volunteers bring their unique set of skills and expertise to help communities and individuals become better involved in planning and placemaking.
- Achieved Investing in Volunteers accreditation three times.

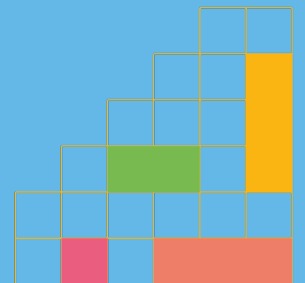
“

“It’s a good feeling to know you are helping someone [...] And from a career perspective [...] it helps keep my skills and knowledge refreshed.”

For more info [click here](#)

Setting the Scene

Community engagement framework



Planning: Why Is It Important?



“The purpose of planning is to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest.” –Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

- A key public service
- Working in the long-term public interest
- Planning for the future
- Wider impacts for health, well-being, equality, climate
- Impacts on day-to-day life: householder alterations to affordable homes to large new developments
- Change can lead to strong feelings and controversy
- Offers significant opportunities for individuals, communities and other stakeholders to be involved

Community Engagement: Why Is It Important?



Community engagement is a way to involve people in decisions that affect them.

Good quality community engagement is:

- **effective** in meeting the needs and expectations of the people involved
- **efficient** by being well informed and properly planned
- **fair** by giving people who may face additional barriers to getting involved an equal opportunity to participate
- **guided** by effective facilitation

The Skeffington Report (1969)



- Prepared by Arthur Skeffington MP and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.
- With individuals and communities feeling increasingly disenfranchised from the planning system, the Skeffington Report was the **first formal recognition of the need for public participation in the planning system.**



Planning Advice Note 3/2010



Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement provides advice on the **legal requirements for community engagement** in relation to planning.

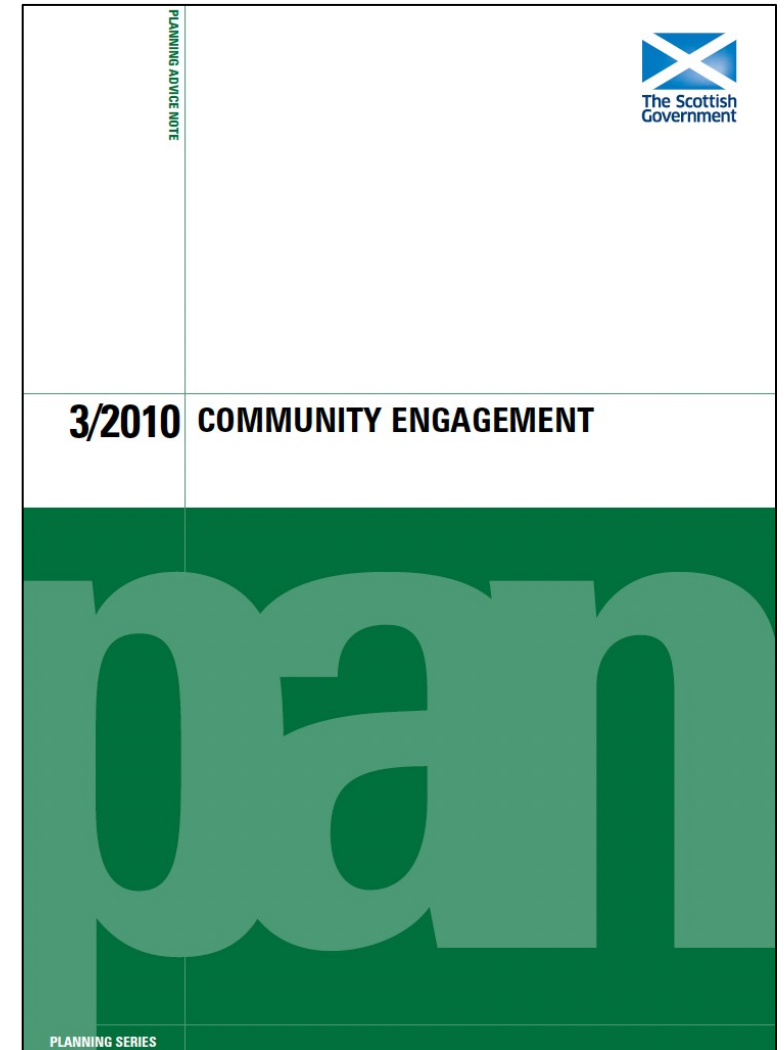
17. When responding to consultations on development plans or applications it is important that community groups ensure that their responses are focused on planning issues. If in doubt speak to the planning authority or Planning Aid for Scotland, about what may or may not be a planning issue. Further information can also be found in the Good Practice Guidance mentioned below.

The Scottish Government provides funding for Planning Aid for Scotland's (PAS's) principal services, such as the maintenance of its telephone helpline, planning advice and the provision of training for members of the public and community groups. Organisations such as the Scottish Government may advise you to contact PAS when you have a question or are seeking advice relevant to a specific case. Further details of this and other aspects of the work of PAS can be found later in the PAN. Contact details can be found in Annex 1.

85. Planning Aid for Scotland provides a free, independent and impartial planning advice service (subject to eligibility criteria), and delivers a range of training events aimed at everyone, including young people, community groups, community councils, Social Enterprises and business start-ups as well as planning professionals and Councillors. Planning Aid for Scotland is a volunteer-based organisation which achieved Investing in Volunteers status in October 2008. Contact details are available at Annex 1.

Planning Aid for Scotland's training programmes aim to stimulate interest in planning issues, as well as providing knowledge, unravel planning policy and procedures, and explain how to get involved effectively e.g. writing effective representations. In 2006 Planning for People gained an award at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning and in 2007 Planning to Act® received a commendation. PAS has also developed SP=EED, a benchmarking tool for community engagement in planning. More information on all programmes are available from the PAS website www.planningaidscotland.org.uk

For more info [click here](#)



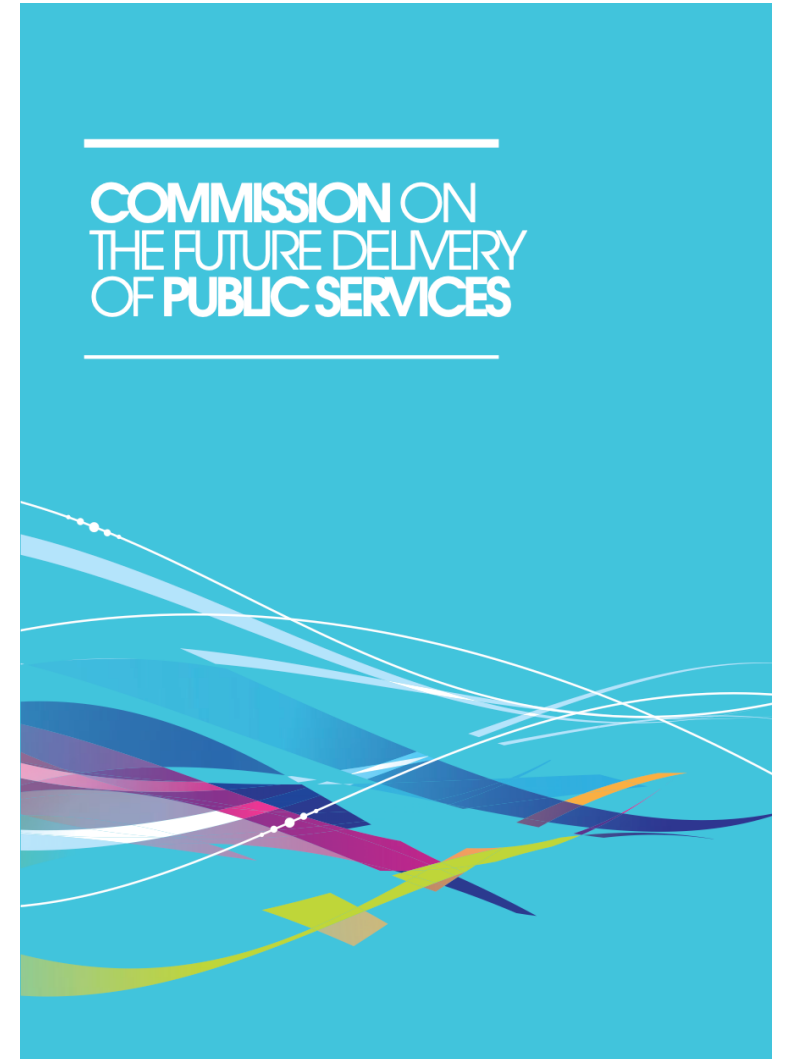
Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011)



Report on the future delivery of public services by the commission chaired by Dr Campbell Christie.

“Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.”

For more info [click here](#)



The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015



The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is a legislative framework that says people should have more control over what happens in their community and they should be involved in making decisions about their community.

“Involving people and communities in making decisions helps build community capacity and also helps the public sector identify local needs and priorities...”

For more info [click here](#)



Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

2015 asp 6

Explanatory Notes have been produced to assist in the understanding of this Act and are available separately

£20.75

Planning: Community Engagement



Some key legislative changes to the planning system that impacted on community engagement from the 2006 and 2019 Planning Acts:

- Pre-Application Consultation required for Major and National Developments
- Local Development Plans to focus on engaging with and meeting the needs of children and young people and Gypsy/Travellers, and to assess housing needs of older people and disabled people
- Play Sufficiency Assessments
- Mediation (duty for Scottish Government to produce guidance on potential use in planning)
- Local Place Plans

Local Place Plans



New statutory right from 2019 Act for **communities to prepare a plan for their place** – an opportunity, but optional...

- Must be about “use and development of land”
- Not part of the Local Development Plan but can suggest changes or additions

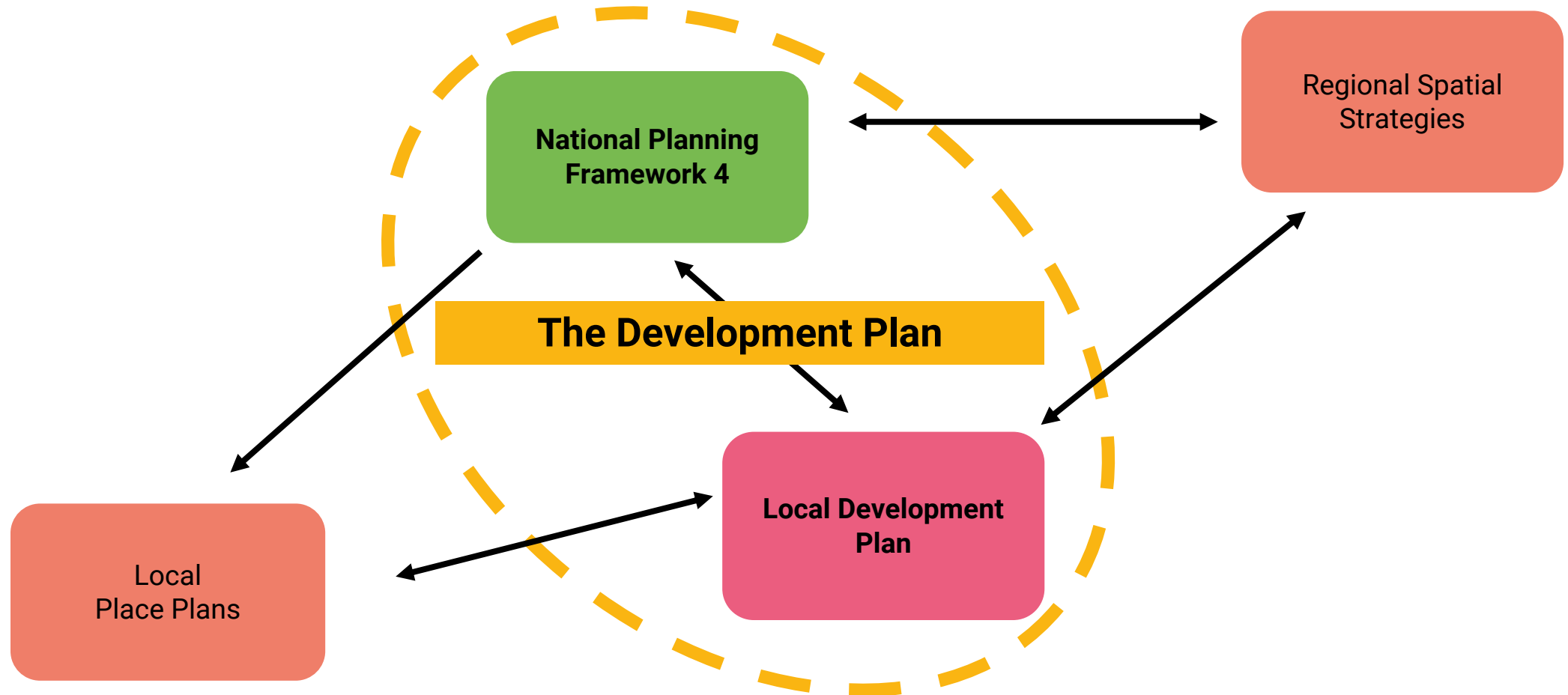
For a guide to preparing an LPP [click here](#)



The Development Plan



The key planning concept to know:

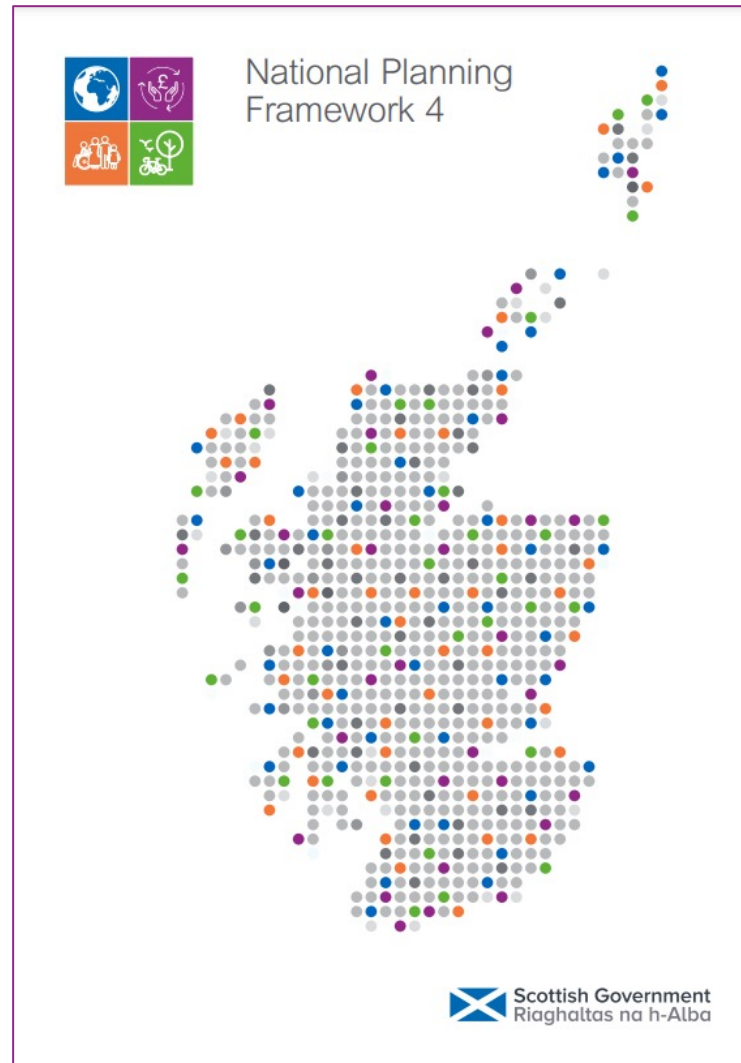


National Planning Framework 4 (2023)



- Significantly strengthened by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, including setting policy nationally.
- Adopted by Scottish Ministers Feb 2023.

For more info [click here](#)



National Spatial Strategy for Scotland to 2045

18 National Developments

33 National Planning Policies

(these policies must be used by planning authorities in determining planning applications)



National Planning Framework 4 (2023)



Cross-cutting Outcome and Policy Links:
A Fair And Inclusive Planning System:

“We expect everyone involved in planning to take steps to ensure that a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places.”

Inclusion is embedded across NPF4, not just relegated to one policy.

For more info [click here](#)

CROSS-CUTTING OUTCOME AND POLICY LINKS:

A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE PLANNING SYSTEM

Our strategy and policies support development that helps to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

We expect everyone involved in planning to take steps to ensure that a wide range of people are involved in shaping their future places. Planning authorities are required to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998. As per the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality duty is applicable and Equality Impact Assessments, Fairer Scotland Duty Assessments and where applicable Island Communities Impact Assessments are required for LDPs. The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child also means that young people must be encouraged to play an active role in planning.

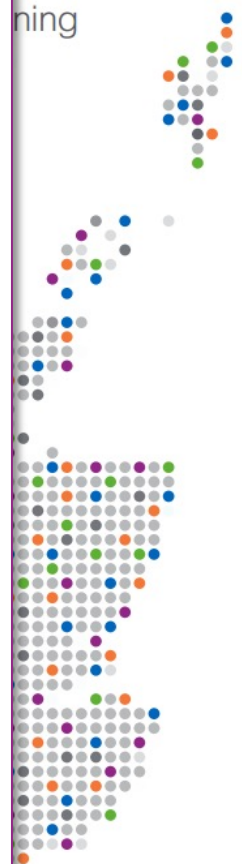
Throughout the planning system, opportunities are available to engage in development planning and decisions about future development. Such engagement, undertaken in line with statutory requirements, should be early, collaborative, meaningful and proportionate. Support or concern expressed on matters material to planning must be given careful consideration in the determination of development proposals.

Our places can only work for everyone if the views of all users are properly understood, but experience shows that some people can find it more challenging to engage with planning.

There are opportunities to involve a wider range of people in the planning system. It is essential, and a statutory requirement, that people with protected characteristics, including disability, race, age, sex and sexual orientation, and including people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, are given particular support to express their views on plans and decisions, with consultations designed to meet the communication needs of people.

The spatial strategy as a whole is clear that our future development must support a just transition, and it highlights opportunities for development and regeneration that are designed to tackle social, economic and health inequalities. [Policy 14](#), focusing on the six qualities of successful places recognises that diversity is an integral part of placemaking. Children and young people will have an important contribution to make, given the long-term impacts of planning for future generations. Women, as well as disabled people and their representatives, can ensure that barriers and challenges of the design of our living and working environments are tackled effectively. We have also provided clear support for development that will help to ensure human rights are maintained, for example: [Policy 16](#) on quality homes which addresses the need for accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople yards, as well as homes for older people and disabled people; and [Policy 21](#) which supports and facilitates spaces and opportunities for play, recreation and sport in our natural and built environments for children and people for all ages.

Our impact assessment has demonstrated that there is potential for significant benefits from more sustainable, liveable and productive places which will be delivered by these and other policies. We recognise that delivery will also depend on fair and inclusive engagement with people, and we will therefore continue to promote best practice and innovation, including in guidance on effective community engagement.





Policy 1: Tackling the Climate & Nature Crises



Policy Intent:

To encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis.

Policy Outcomes:

- Zero carbon, nature positive places.

Sustainable Places: Policy 1

When considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.

Key policy connections

All other policies.



Policy 13: Sustainable Transport



Policy Intent:

To encourage, promote and facilitate developments that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably.

Policy Outcomes:

- Investment in transport infrastructure supports connectivity and reflects place-based approaches and local living.
- More, better, safer and more inclusive active and sustainable travel opportunities.
- Developments are in locations which support sustainable travel.

Sustainable Places: Policy 13

A) Proposals to improve, enhance or provide active travel infrastructure, public transport infrastructure or multi-modal hubs will be supported. B) Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the transport requirements generated have been considered in line with the sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.

Key policy connections

Tackling the climate and nature crises | Climate mitigation and adaptation | Design, quality and place | Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods Infrastructure first | Quality homes | Rural homes | Blue and green infrastructure | Business and industry | City, town, local and commercial centres Retail | Rural development | Tourism

Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Planning Guidance (2023)



- The overall aim is to reduce conflict, **improve community engagement** and build trust in planning matters.
- The guidance will set high-level expectations on how planning authorities can engage with the public when preparing their Local Development Plans.

**Effective Community
Engagement in Local
Development Planning
Guidance**

Consultation Draft

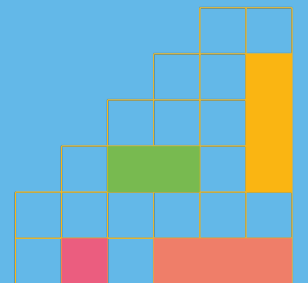
For more info [click here](#)

May 2023

 Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Setting the Scene

Best practice



National Standards for Community Engagement



The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement.

1. Inclusion
2. Support
3. Planning
4. Working together
5. Methods
6. Communication
7. Impact



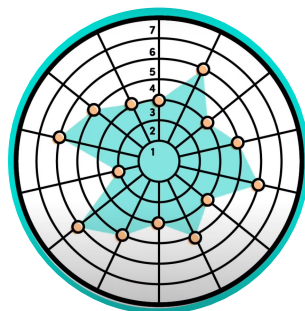
For more info [click here](#)

Scottish Planning Context



The Place Principle

The **Place Principle** is the overarching context for place-based working in Scotland.



The **Place Standard Tool** provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place.



The **Place Standard Inclusive Communication Toolkit** is a step-by-step guide to providing a communication inclusive experience.

For more info [click here](#)

SP=EED



Successful Planning = Effective Engagement & Delivery

- A practical guide to undertaking effective community engagement in planning.
- SP=EED Verification, a training programme in engagement skills.

For more info [click here](#)

SP=EED[®]

Successful Planning = Effective Engagement and Delivery

A Practical Guide to Better Engagement
in Planning and Placemaking

pas
building active citizenship

Effective Engagement



3 Levels



Level 1
Informing



Level 2
Consulting



Level 3
Partnership

8 Criteria

1. Transparency & Integrity
2. Co-ordination
3. Information
4. Appropriateness
5. Responsiveness
6. Inclusiveness
7. Monitoring & Evaluating
8. Learning & Sharing

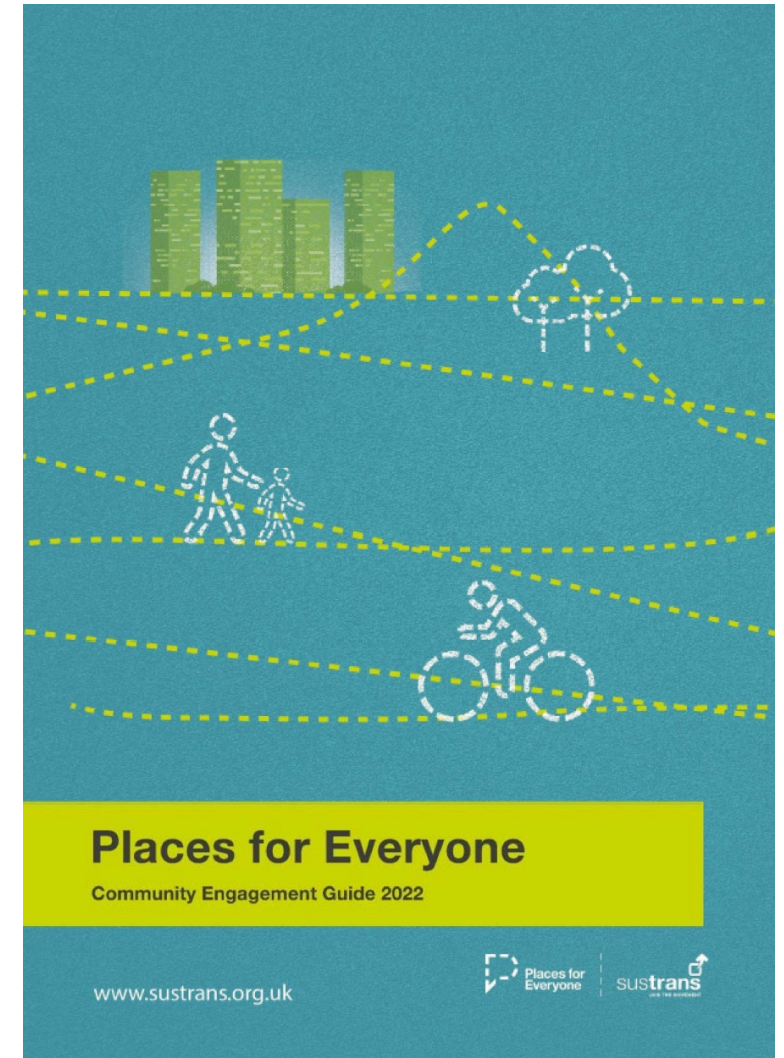
Sustrans PfE Community Engagement Guide



The guide provides an overview of community engagement best practice in the context of Places for Everyone projects.

“Successful community engagement is based on respect, openness and inclusion.”

For more info [click here](https://www.sustrans.org.uk)



International Association for Public Participation



INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



For more info [click here](#)

Community Engagement



Creativity can unlock new possibilities



Connection, understanding and insight are all deepened when our imaginations and emotions are stirred



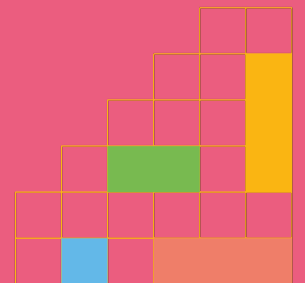
Fun and celebration help us see the potential beyond the everyday



Engagement should be engaging!

Case Studies

Examples of inclusive and creative community engagement



Inclusive Engagement: Gypsy/Travellers



Engaging with Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople to inform Fife's new Local Development Plan.

- We had 50+ conversations, receiving 250+ comments.
- Engaged with organisations that work with the communities to understand land use issues and service provision needs.



Inclusive Engagement: Gypsy/Travellers



Extensive background in bringing placemaking to those with seldom-heard voices, such as the Gypsy/Traveller community:

- **Reach Out** research project
- Gypsy/Traveller **guidance documents**
- Gypsy/Traveller **Place Standard** project

As an **impartial organisation** with a wealth of experience in engaging seldom-heard groups in planning and placemaking, we were well placed to undertake this work.

Inclusive Engagement: Young People



Collecting the ideas, opinions, and suggestions of young Fife residents to inform Fife's Local Development Plan.

- We engaged with 200+ people aged 16-25 from a range of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds via an online survey and in-person workshops.

“

“I think there is a lack of opportunities for young adults in the area. For socialising, recreation, being outdoors, good quality employment, etc.”





Inclusive Engagement: Young People

Experience engaging young people in planning:

- **Education Programme**
- **In the Footsteps of Geddes** used digital technology
- **Bridging the Gap** intergenerational project
- Youth engagement to inform **Local Development Plans**
- Engagement for the draft **National Planning Framework 4**
- Collaboration with **Play Scotland** on youth engagement sessions

Creative Engagement: Climate-Ready Plans



The Live Life Morvern Community Vision and Action Plan has climate awareness at its core.

- We worked with Sniffer and the Place and Wellbeing Alliance to trial an early version of the Place Standard with a Climate Lens.
- We used it as an action planning tool across three themed online workshops.

“

“The consultation process and workshops were very widely publicised [...] so that everyone couldn’t but be aware of the opportunities to make their voices heard.”





**Planning
Aid Scotland**

Creative Engagement: Digital



Using digital tools to facilitate community engagement.

- Online training and workshops
- Exploring the need for new digital engagement and analysis tools with partners across public, private sectors and academia
- Community Map Scotland

For more info on Community Map Scotland [click here](#)





Active Travel: Sustaining Choices

Sustaining Choices aims to assist communities across Scotland to develop Sustainable and Active Travel Action Plans for their area.

- Working with three communities to explore walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport.



“

“Not only have we been able to get a clear understanding of how we might meet our community’s needs for getting about but also the most effective ways to engage with our geographically diverse community.”

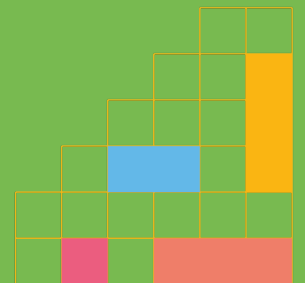
Active Travel: Sustaining Choices



- Developing community engagement skills through **training, ongoing coaching, peer to peer learning events**, and the experience of **running a community engagement exercise** in their area.
- Different approaches depending on local resources, skills and creativity e.g. **engagement activities in a day centre, youth workshops, guided walk and talk of a local path network, online surveys, on street engagement, celebration and reflection events.**

Resources and Links

Community engagement



Find Out More



Planning Aid Scotland

- [Advice Service](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Community Led Plans](#)
- [Volunteering](#)
- [Resources \(Guide for Community Delivery of Local Place Plans\)](#)

Community Engagement Framework

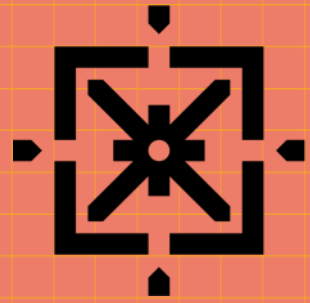
- [Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement](#)
- [Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services \(2011\)](#)
- [The Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#)
- [Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places \(2016\)](#)
- [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [Planning Circular 2/2021: Guidance on the Promotion and Use of Mediation in the Scottish Planning System](#)
- [National Planning Framework 4 \(2023\)](#)
- [Effective Community Engagement in Local Development Planning Guidance \(2023\)](#)

Best Practice

- [National Standards for Community Engagement](#)
- [Our Place Website \(Place Principle and Place Standard Tool\)](#)
- [Planning Aid Scotland's Guide to Effective Community Engagement: SP=EED](#)
- [PfE Community Engagement Guide](#)
- [International Association for Public Participation](#)

Case Studies

- [Gypsy/Travellers](#)
- [Young People](#)
- [Climate-Ready Plans](#)
- [Video: Planning Aid Scotland and Morvern Community – Climate Focused Community-led Plan](#)
- [Digital \(Community Map Scotland\)](#)
- [Sustaining Choices](#)



**Planning
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Thank you!

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office@pas.org.uk*

