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16 January 2023

Dear Colleague

We are delighted to inform you that on 11 January 2023, the Scottish Parliament voted to approve National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

Approval of NPF4 marks the conclusion of a significant period of hard work, effective consultation, extensive engagement and valued contributions from across Scottish society. We would like to thank you all for your part in shaping NPF4. We are proud that NPF4 is getting positive recognition from a wide variety of stakeholder groups, along with the strong support of the Scottish Parliament.

It is important to note that the Scottish Parliament's approval is not the end of the process and that NPF4 is not yet part of the statutory development plan. The next step is for the commencement of provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which amend the composition of the development plan, in particular section 13, which will make the National Planning Framework part of the development plan. This is expected to happen on 12 February 2023. Thereafter, our intention is that Scottish Ministers will adopt and publish NPF4 on **13 February 2023 at 9am**, meaning that it is in force and National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy are superseded from that date and time.

Publication of NPF4 on 13 February will also have the effect that all strategic development plans and any supplementary guidance issued in connection with them cease to have effect on that date.

Until 13 February, NPF4 is not part of the development plan and the weight given to it in decision making is a matter for the decision maker. We would however expect that, given NPF4 has now been approved by the Scottish Parliament, and its adoption and publication (in its approved form) is the only outstanding action, it would be considered as a significant material consideration during this period.



In advance of NPF4 adoption, we will issue advice on transitional arrangements for local development plans, which will also cover implementation of housing policies and some other considerations during the changeover period, including for decision-making. We anticipate regulations coming into force and publication of related guidance for the new local development planning system this spring.

Whilst approval of NPF4 is a significant milestone, this is just the beginning of a new phase for planning in Scotland. We are now ready to focus our efforts and resources on delivery and look forward to working with all to realise the aspirations of NPF4.

Yours faithfully



**Dr Fiona Simpson**  
Chief Planner



**Tom Arthur**  
Minister for Public Finance, Planning  
and Community Wealth