

Minister for Local Government and Planning
Ministear airson Riaghaltas Ionadail agus Dealbhadh

Derek Mackay MSP
Derek MacAoidh BPA



F/T: 0845 774 1741
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Kevin Stewart MSP
Convener
Local Government and Regeneration Committee
Scottish Parliament



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Thank you for your letter of 3 October regarding the above, and for providing the Minutes of the Local Government and Regeneration Committee's meeting on 2 October.

I appreciate the Committee's continuing interest in the review of National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Your letter raised concerns about the timing and process of laying the second National Planning Framework (NPF2) in 2008. I acknowledge these issues and hope you will agree that we have taken positive steps to address the concerns raised in relation to NPF2, by making the NPF3 process considerably more transparent and accessible.

In response to the specific points you raise, and in accordance with the view of the Committee, I now intend to lay the Proposed NPF3 in January 2014. We will aim to ensure that this occurs as early in January as possible, ideally immediately following the recess. As suggested, we will also alert our stakeholders to this timescale to help facilitate their engagement in the process.

The minute of the meeting also refers to the review of the SPP, and I am aware that the Committee may have a continued interest in this, as well as NPF3. As previously advised in my letter on 4 September, I have extended the timescale for finalising the SPP until June 2014, to facilitate continued integration of the documents. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for consideration of the SPP, when NPF3 is laid I will also provide a position statement on the SPP, to update the Committee on key issues arising from the consultation. I appreciate that NPF3 alone will account for a significant share of the Committee's time, but the extended timescale will allow for issues arising during consideration of NPF3 to be addressed in the finalised SPP, where appropriate.

I look forward to discussing NPF3 with you early next year.

DEREK MACKAY