

Ariane Burgess MSP  
Convenor  
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

25 November 2025

Dear Ariane

I am pleased to advise the Committee that our 2025 Programme for Government commitment to declutter the planning system by removing all dated national planning advice is now complete.

Our aim has been to reduce the volume of advice significantly, to avoid confusion and reduce complexity. Following a review of the documents and after consulting with stakeholders, we are withdrawing 27 Planning Advice Notes (PANs) and 19 other pieces of guidance from our collection of current advice. This equates to 71% of the planning advice that was available (over 1000 pages).

Annex A of this letter contains a list of those documents which will be marked as withdrawn.

I am conscious that some of the responses to the short consultation we undertook indicated that stakeholders felt that some of the documents we propose to withdraw should instead be retained and/or updated, but I am clear that National Planning Framework 4 and the policies it contains provide the most up-to-date examples of Scottish Government policy. Advice and guidance is not intended to remain in place in perpetuity and given the age of most of the documents we would expect that good practice should by now be established practice.

The Committee should also be aware that circulars were not included in the review as they are written to accompany and explain legislative change so generally still reflect current policy.

Whilst this commitment is complete, we will not be complacent and I remain conscious of the Committee's comments in their letter of 9 September about the pace at which new guidance to support the implementation of NPF4 is being prepared and its accessibility. The intention is for new guidance to focus on those areas where there are pressures or a need for action in response to our delivery priorities. For example we are close to concluding work on new updated biodiversity guidance and support for planning authorities handling applications for battery energy storage. As I noted in my response of 20 October the forthcoming Delivery Programme update will provide more detail on the guidance which is already available to support NPF4.

Yours sincerely

**Ivan McKee MSP**  
**Minister for Public Finance**

## **Annex A**

### **Planning Advice Notes**

Community Councils and Planning (47)  
Small Towns (42)  
Private Finance Initiatives (55)  
Improving Town Centres (59)  
Natural Heritage (60)  
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (61)  
Reclamation of Surface Mineral Workings (64)  
Trunk Roads Planning Applications Handling Best Practice Guidance (66)  
Housing Quality (67)  
Design Statements (68)  
Housing in the Countryside (72)  
Conservation Areas (71)  
Rural Diversification (73)  
Planning for Transport (75)  
Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation (51)  
Designing Safer Places (77)  
Inclusive Design (78)  
Water and Drainage (79)  
Control and Management of Fly Posting (80)  
Local Authority Interest Developments (82)  
Farm and Forestry Buildings (39)  
Golf Courses and Associated Developments (43)  
Electronic Planning Guidance (70)  
Strategic Environment Assessment of Development Plans (1)  
Energy from Waste (63)  
Planning and Archaeology (2)  
Community Engagement (3)

### **Other Planning Advice**

Deep Geothermal  
Microgeneration  
Wind farm developments on peat land  
Landfill gas  
Anaerobic digestion  
Large photovoltaic arrays  
Heat demands  
Woody biomass  
Data protection  
Hydro schemes  
Energy storage  
Onshore wind turbines  
Flood risk  
Designing Streets – aligning consents  
Local authority street guidance  
Commonwealth games village – case study  
Auditing of new road schemes  
Planning and waste management  
Wind energy bid assessments  
Net economic benefit