

Our Reference: 202200305047

Your Reference: FW: Correspondence from the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee on NPF4

22 June 2022

Dear Convener,

Thank you for your letter of 8 June regarding the timetable for the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

I have been extremely encouraged by the interest in our Draft NPF4, befitting its importance, and am pleased to report that we received over 780 responses to our public consultation from a wide range of stakeholders. We have now made the consultation responses available online and will publish a Report of Analysis in due course. The responses can be viewed at: [Draft National Planning Framework 4 - Scottish Government - Citizen Space \(consult.gov.scot\)](https://consult.gov.scot/draft-national-planning-framework-4-scottish-government-citizen-space).

We have been carefully considering the wealth of evidence we received through both scrutiny from the Scottish Parliament and the consultation, and I have been working with officials to reconsider and refine the NPF4 text as a result. I am encouraged that there is strong support for the general direction of travel with NPF4 and we are now focusing on ensuring the wording provides the clarity the Committee and others have sought.

As I said in Parliament, it is important that we get NPF4 right, and that is my focus rather than working to a set timetable. I can confirm therefore, that I now intend to lay a revised NPF4 in the Scottish Parliament in the autumn in order to continue to reflect on the high volume of responses received and ensure that the NPF4 which I bring to Parliament for approval is robust and will deliver.

I want to ensure the momentum continues and move quickly from drafting and approval to focus on delivery. But I also appreciate that Parliament will need time to digest the changes and to move to a vote from an informed position. I would therefore anticipate that there may be a short period of a few weeks between laying the document and the Parliamentary vote. Should you find it helpful, I would be happy to give evidence to the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and provide an overview of the changes.

I agree that effective monitoring of NPF4 will be vital. I recently discussed the issue with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, of which I co-chair with COSLA. The Group comprises COSLA, Heads of Planning Scotland, the Key Agencies, the Royal Town Planning Institute (Scotland), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) and the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR). At our meeting in May, the Group indicated that they were keen to be involved in work on monitoring to ensure that linkages are made with performance monitoring at national, regional and local levels. We have agreed to set up a short life working group to take this forward

I trust that you find this update useful. My officials will continue to liaise with Committee Clerks to keep you up to date on NPF4.

Yours sincerely

TOM ARTHUR