10 January 2020

Dear James

During its scrutiny of the Planning (Scotland) Bill, the Local Government and Communities Committee showed considerable interest in provisions relating to the National Planning Framework. The Scottish Government has recently been considering the process for engagement and preparation of Scotland’s fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). In our 2019-20 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government has highlighted NPF4 as having a major part to play in supporting Scotland’s response to the global climate emergency.

Our work has already begun in preparing NPF4. Section 2 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, re-shaping requirements for the content and procedures for preparing the National Planning Framework, came into force on 8 November, along with the Purpose of Planning (section 1), which now applies to the preparation of the Framework.

The Scottish Government has now published its early engagement programme. The main aim of this first step is to seek the views of people, communities and other stakeholders on the shape and content of NPF4. We have designed a programme that we hope will encourage people to set out their aspirations for Scotland in 2050. The programme includes: the development of supporting evidence; a range of events around Scotland during Spring 2020; and a community grant scheme to support communities to develop their own views of Scotland 2050.

Following this period of extensive engagement, we plan to publish, and lay in Parliament, a draft of NPF4 for public consultation in September 2020. At that point the Scottish Parliament is also expected to consider the draft for a period of up to 120 days. After the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021 we expect a final version of NPF4 to be laid in Autumn 2021, seeking Scottish Parliament approval around the end of 2021.
We will publish updated information throughout the NPF4 process on the website www.transformingplanning.scot. I look forward to further engagement with the Parliament during the development of NPF4. If the Committee wished, I and my officials would of course be happy to provide any further information or support in advance of the formal, statutory consultation later this year.

Kind regards

KEVIN STEWART