Local Government and Communities Committee

Planning (Scotland) Bill

Key themes arising from the online survey of young people and the Dialogue online consultation exercise

Introduction

As part of the Local Government and Communities Committee scrutiny of the Planning (Scotland) Bill, two separate online tools were used to gather the views of respondents that may not have had the opportunity, or would be unlikely to respond to, the formal call for written evidence. These were:

- **Online Survey**: An online survey aimed at capturing the views of young people promoted through the Scottish Youth Parliament and Youthlink on the planning system was launched on 22 January 2018, with a closing date for responses of 5 February 2018 – although this date was extended until 7 February 2018 to allow for any late responses.

- **Dialogue**: Dialogue is an online tool aimed at generating ideas in response to specific challenges facing Scotland today. Respondents can get involved in discussions and debates on a defined topic by submitting their own ideas or reading, rating and commenting on those submitted by others. The Committee agreed to pilot a Dialogue “challenge” on the Planning (Scotland) Bill which was open for ideas and comments from 20 February 2018 until 2 March 2018.

Brief analyses of the results of these exercises are set out below.

Understanding these Analyses

There are a number of issues that should be considered when reading this document:

- **Respondees were self-selecting**: This means that the views expressed may not match those of the population as a whole and should not be read as such.

- **Complexity**: The Bill proposes amendments to an already complex system of legislation. This complexity may have acted as a barrier to responses.

- **Stakeholders**: The planning system involves a wide range of stakeholders, with often competing priorities and views. Unanimity of views on any issue is unlikely, which will be reflected in the analysis.

- **Timescales**: The limited time available to respond to the survey and Dialogue exercise, and for the subsequent analysis of responses, has impacted on the number and depth of responses and the detail of this analysis.
What are “key themes”?

This analysis aims to highlight key issues and concerns about the proposals in the Planning (Scotland) Bill raised by multiple respondents to the survey and Dialogue “challenge”. It is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of every issue raised.

Online Survey of Young People

A survey aimed at gathering the views of people aged between 12 and 25 on the proposed changes to the planning system was launched on Monday 22 January 2018, with a closing date for responses of Monday 5 February 2018. The survey was kept open for a further two days, to allow for late submissions. A copy of the survey template is attached at the end of this document.

The survey was promoted by the Scottish Youth Parliament, Youthlink Scotland and via the Committee’s social media channels. A brief overview of who responded to the survey the key themes raised are set out below.

Who responded: A total of 38 responses were received – of which 60% were from females and 40% males. The majority of respondents (53%) were at school, with 22% at university and 19% working full time with 3% both working part-time or at college. No apprentices, unemployed people or “other” replied.

Respondees living in 18 of Scotland’s 32 local authorities responded, with the largest response (22%) coming from the City of Edinburgh. Notable nil response rates came from Glasgow City, Dundee and the three islands authorities.

The age of respondents was quite evenly spread across the 12-25 range. The only age with no response was 14. The proportion of responses from other ages ranged between 3.1% and 15.6%.

Given that only 38 people responded, it is not possible to carry out any meaningful demographic breakdown of responses.

Key themes: The survey posed eight questions about the planning system, the results of which are summarised below.

- **Knowledge of the planning system**: Prior knowledge of the planning system was generally poor. 12.5% of respondees had never heard of the planning system and 50% rated their knowledge of planning as either bad or very bad. 18.75% rated their knowledge of the system as “neither good nor bad”, the same as rated their knowledge as good. No-one rated their knowledge of the system as very good.
• **Involvement in the planning system:** Most respondees have not had any direct involvement in planning matters. However, 31% have taken part in a charrette, 28% taken part in a consultation event for a proposed development, 22% commented on a draft development plan and 16% commented on a planning application.

• **Encouraging young people to become involved in the planning system:** The clear consensus is that local authorities are very poor at encouraging young people to engage in the planning system. No respondee rated their authority’s efforts as “very good” or good. 12.5% were neutral, 41% rated them as bad and 37.5% as “very bad”, with 9% choosing “don’t know”.

• **Improving engagement:** Respondees were asked to rank five options for improving engagement of young people in the planning system. The results were as follows:

1. Use of social media to keep young people updated
2. Planning information available through schools and colleges, such as on notice boards, at assemblies or in newsletters
3. Speak directly with youth and community groups/organisations by meeting young people locally who might be affected by a planning decision
4. Make planning information on their website easier to find and understand
5. Asking Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to consult with young people in the area on planning matters

• **Local Place Plans:** Respondees were asked how likely it is that they would become involved in the drafting of a local place plan. 58% said that they were either “very likely” or likely to become involved, 21% neither likely nor unlikely and 18% either unlikely or very unlikely to do so, with 3% answering “don’t know”.

• **Gathering the views of young people on draft Local Place Plans:** Respondees were asked to rank six possible methods for gathering the views of young people on a draft Local Place Plan. The results were as follows:

1. Share surveys and polls on social media
2. Ask for views from school pupil councils and college/university student representative groups
3. Dedicated meeting/discussion day/focus group for young people
4. Have a special consultation website/online forum for young people
5. Ask for the views of the local youth forum
6. Ask for the views of the local Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament

• **Legislative change:** Respondents were asked whether the Planning (Scotland) Bill should place a duty on community bodies drafting a Local Place Plan to consult with young people. 78% of respondents though such a
duty should be introduced, 9% disagreed with the proposal and 13% didn’t know.

- **Helping young people engage**: Respondents were asked for suggestions as to what help might young people might need to become involved in the drafting of a local place plan. Seven suggestions were made, as set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Star rating</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach young people to help with plans or put out things in places</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>All local development plans should have policies and zones allocated for Food Belts, replacing green belts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as schools looking for young people to take part.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making projects sound exciting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it clear what it is, and why you want young people's views.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also show the young people the results afterwards. Let us know how</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>our opinions have benefited you!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sessions / packs with a guide. Show the benefits it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would bring to the local area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councils actually need to engage with the schools in their authority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during the process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, despite limited knowledge of the planning system, young people are keen to be involved in decisions that affect the future development of their local area. To do this, local authorities, community councils and other stakeholders will have to actively engage with young people – using approaches that are accessible and understandable. It is important that such engagement must be genuine and that young people can see results from their involvement.

**Dialogue challenge on the Planning (Scotland) Bill**

Dialogue, an online consultation tool, allows users to create “ideas” which others can then comment and vote on (from 0 to 5 stars) – in much the same way that many newspaper comment systems operate. In total 19 ideas were created, with 59 comments and 43 votes made.

The ideas and comments cover a broad range of planning issues, which are very briefly summarised in the table below. The nature of the Dialogue software and the limited number of responses make identifying key themes difficult. However, the idea with the highest number of supportive comments is for the creation of an equal right of appeal – which was also mentioned in several other ideas. More generally, the majority of ideas and comments focused on improving public engagement and involvement in various aspects of the planning system.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notifications on proposals etc.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Improved public engagement on proposals with cross-boundary impacts and protection of the green belt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability of information</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Lack of fact checking of information supplied to decision makers by developers, officials and statutory consultees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of applicants</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>The Committee should take oral evidence from planning stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Bill process mirrors our experience of planning applications...</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>5 (2 votes)</td>
<td>This is not a real consultation opportunity and issues raised are liable to be ignored as the Bill progresses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About young people and planning</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>4.5 (two votes)</td>
<td>Young people have not been asked for their views on the Bill, or do not know how to submit views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply an ePlanning Code of Professional Good Practice</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>5 (5 votes)</td>
<td>Planning authority e-planning portals increasingly publish incomplete document libraries, or include redacted documentation. Also Equal Right of Appeal and right to appear at a pre-determination hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources in the planning system</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>4 (2 votes)</td>
<td>Planning departments are under-resourced. Increased fee income is welcome, but it must be invested in the planning service. Important to note that planning is a public service and not one provided to the benefit of developers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on what's happening in planning in the local area and ensuring meaningful engagement</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>2 (2 votes)</td>
<td>Improvements to public engagement, particularly at early stages of the development plan and planning application processes – including improved online tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Houses, Build Communities</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>3.5 (2 votes)</td>
<td>Too many urban sites are being developed for hotel, student residences and other non-domestic uses, leading to an erosion of established communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure of efficiencies</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>5 (2 votes)</td>
<td>How should performance be measured – administrative efficiency or outcomes (high quality places), how does this related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency and Community Involvement</td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>4.8 (6 votes)</td>
<td>There needs to be greater transparency in decision making, especially planning obligations. Also, current proposals for Local Place Plans do not take account of demands on community resources – with likely limited impact on the statutory development plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third party rights of appeal/Equal rights of appeal</td>
<td>Eleven</td>
<td>5 (6 votes)</td>
<td>All commenters support the introduction of an equal right of appeal for communities, in certain defined circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and access to information</td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5 (7 votes)</td>
<td>Communities find planning complex and difficult to engage with, with engagement often having no effect. Need for dedicated community contact point for applications and a way to influence decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplified Development Zones</td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>3 (1 vote)</td>
<td>Simplified Development Zones hand too much power to developers and Ministers and should be removed from the Bill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater adherence to Local Development Plans</td>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>4.5 (2 votes)</td>
<td>Once the Local Development Plan is agreed there should be greater adherence to it by decision makers considering planning applications, including at appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Management - Future Proofed</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Development plans and planning decisions should take into accounts the needs of all, including elderly and disabled people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcing Local Place Plans</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>4.3 (3 votes)</td>
<td>Community bodies should receive financial and professional support to draft local place plans. Also concerns that some community councils are not representative and do not gather community views effectively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning and young people

1. Hello

What is this?
A short survey by the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee to gather the views of people aged 12-25 on proposed changes to the Scottish planning system.

Why should I respond?
Whether you know about the planning system or not, planning decisions affect you. Decisions on where to build new homes, offices, factories and what parks and green spaces to protect from development are all made through the planning system.

How do I find out more about planning?
The Scottish Planning Information Centre has produced a short briefing on the planning system, which you can find by clicking or tapping here.

How do I find out more about the proposed changes to the planning system?
More information on the proposals, which are set out in the Planning (Scotland) Bill, can be found by clicking or tapping here.

Nice to know
You will not be asked to provide your name. Your response will be held securely and will only be viewed by researchers at the Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Individual responses will not be published, but a summary setting out key themes we find from looking at all of the responses will be. The survey will close at 1200 on Monday 5 February.
2. The planning system and you

How would you rate your knowledge of the Scottish planning system?

☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Neither good nor bad
☐ Bad
☐ Very bad
☐ I've never heard of it

Have you ever done any of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objected to a planning application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented on a draft development plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken part in a consultation on a proposed planning application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been involved in a &quot;charette - that is a public meeting or workshop devoted to the design of an area or major new development.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have been involved in the planning system in a way not mentioned above, please tell us here:

[Blank space for input]
3. Encouraging young people to become involved in the planning system

In Scotland, the planning system is managed by the local authority (sometimes called a Council). Gathering the views of local people on proposed planning policies and planning applications is an important part of a Council’s work in managing the planning system. How would you rate your Council’s efforts to gather the views of young people on planning matters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Neither good nor bad</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very bad</th>
<th>I don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How good is your council at gathering the views of young people on planning matters?

How could your Council improve the ways it engages with young people on planning matters? (Please put the following options in an order were 1 is your favourite idea and 5 is your least favourite)

- Use of social media to keep young people updated
- Make planning information on their website easier to find and understand
- Planning information available through schools and colleges, such as on notice boards, at assemblies or in newsletters
- Speak directly with youth and community groups/organisations by meeting young people locally who might be affected by a planning decision
- Asking Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to consult with young people in the area on planning matters

Any other suggestions? Tell us here:
4. Local place plans

What is a local place plan

One proposed change to the planning system is to allow Community Councils (a group that gathers the views of the local community and passes them to the local authority and other public bodies) or other community bodies to produce a local place plan (LPP). A LPP would set out a community’s priorities for the development of their area. Every Council would be required to consider the contents of an LPP when drafting its local development plan, meaning that a LPP could influence every decision on applications for planning permission in its area.

Just for information - a local development plan is a document prepared by each Council and National Park Authority in Scotland. The local development plan is the basis for making planning decisions in each Council or National Park area.

How likely is it that you would become involved in the making of a local place plan, this could include things like commenting on a draft plan, attending a public meeting or even helping to write the plan?

☐ Very likely
☐ Likely
☐ Neither likely nor unlikely
☐ Unlikely
☐ Very unlikely
☐ I don’t know

What would be the best ways of gathering the views of young people on a draft local place plan? (Please put the following options in an order were 1 is your favourite idea and 6 is your least favourite)

Share surveys and polls on social media
☐
Have a special consultation website/online forum for young people
☐
Dedicated meeting/discussion day/focus group for young people
☐
Ask for views from school pupil councils and college/university student representative groups
☐
Ask for the views of the local youth forum

Ask for the views of the local Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament

Any other suggestions? tell us here:

Do you think the law should be changed so that young people must be asked for their views during the drafting of a local place plan:

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

What help might you, or other young people, need to become involved in the creation of a local place plan? (Don't worry if you can't think of anything, just leave this box blank and move on to the next question)
5. About you

How old are you?

Years

Your age

Your sex:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Are you currently (please tick one box that best indicates your current role, e.g. if you are a university student who works part-time, then tick "At university"):

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- At school
- At college
- At university
- An apprentice or trainee
- None
- Other (please specify):

Which Council area do you live in? Not sure, then click or tap here and enter your postcode to find out.
Choose from the list of Councils:

Your Council