

Appendix C - Policy Assessment

C1.1 Introduction

- C1.1.1 Part 3 of the draft National Planning Framework (NPF4) sets out draft national planning policies (“draft policies”) for day to day use: in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents.
- C1.1.2 Part 3 of the draft NPF4 is to be taken as a whole, and all relevant policies are to be applied to each application. In addition, draft policies 1 – 6 are ‘Universal Policies’ which are to apply to all planning decisions.
- C1.1.3 The draft policies are set out under 4 themes of: Sustainable Places, (Universal Policies), Liveable Places, Productive Places, and Distinctive Places. This appendix sets out the findings of the assessment of the draft policies. Findings are set out as shown below and follow the same order as they appear in the draft NPF4.

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C1.2 Alternatives

C1.2.1 The 2005 Act requires the Environmental Report to identify and assess any ‘reasonable alternatives’ to the plan or programme, taking into account its objectives and geographical scope. The draft NPF4 makes clear the policies in Part 3 are to be taken as a whole, and all relevant policies should be applied to each application. Nevertheless, and where relevant and applicable, consideration of alternatives to the draft policies is included below. Views are invited on the SEA, including on the consideration of reasonable alternatives, through the consultation process.

C1.2.2 Table C1.1 sets out the key to the assessment findings.

Table C1.1 Assessment Findings Key

✓	Positive Effect
X	Negative Effect
0	Negligible Effect
X✓	Mixed Effect
✓✓	Positive Effect (Significant)
XX	Negative Effect (Significant)
?	Uncertain

C1.3 Universal Policies – Sustainable Places

The draft policy notes that to achieve a net zero, nature positive Scotland, the planning system must be rebalanced so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all plans and decisions. The draft policy also notes that the planning system should apply the Place Principle and take a design-led approach to future development. This should include working with stakeholders and local communities to create liveable, healthy and sustainable places that improve lives, support sustainable and inclusive growth and contribute to net-zero and environmental ambitions.



To support this, six policies are set out:

- Policy 1: Plan-led approach to sustainable development
- Policy 2: Climate emergency
- Policy 3: Nature crisis
- Policy 4: Human rights and equality
- Policy 5: Community wealth building
- Policy 6: Design, quality and place

BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓✓	The draft Universal Policies are expected to give rise to long term significant positive effects for biodiversity, flora and fauna. Draft Policy 3 - Nature crisis introduces new policies on enhancing biodiversity, including from new development, and facilitates the creation of nature networks to support improved ecological connectivity, the creation of new or restoration of degraded habitats, or through measures to increase populations of priority species. Focusing on emissions reduction and climate change adaptation, draft Policy 2: Climate emergency should further benefit biodiversity as biodiversity is intrinsically linked to climate and climate change.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Significant long term positive effects are expected from new draft policy (Policy 2) requiring planning authorities to give significant weight to the global climate emergency , and through the focus given to designing buildings, infrastructure and spaces which are adaptable to climate change.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓✓	

AIR

Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	Draft Policy 2: Climate emergency , should lead to significant long term positive effects
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Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	from continuing commitment to emissions reductions and climate change adaptation, for example, through use of blue/green infrastructure, which can help to absorb pollutants.
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Significant long term positive effects are expected from the continuing commitment to climate change adaptation. Draft Policy 2: Climate emergency notes development proposals for new, or alterations to, buildings, infrastructure and spaces, should be designed to be adaptable to the future impacts of climate change. Indirect positive effects may arise where consideration is given to nature based solutions to climate change adaptation.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	✓	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓	Whilst negative impacts may arise where new development lead to soil sealing, new draft policy on enhancing biodiversity and the creation of new or restoration of degraded habitats (Policy 3 - Nature crisis) should lead to indirect benefits from broader environmental improvements.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓✓	Potential for significant positive effects on historic assets and their settings through provisions in draft Policy 6: Design, quality and place which seek to achieve high quality designs that contribute positively to the character and sense of place, and through the incorporation of key principles of New Design in Historic Settings.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓	Positive effects on landscape and geodiversity may arise as draft Policy 6: Design, quality and place emphasises that development proposals should be designed to a high quality so that the scale and nature
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and	✓	

areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity		of the development contributes positively to the character and sense of place of the area.
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	This suite of draft policies actively supports long term, positive effects on both natural and built material assets which has the potential to be significant.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓✓	Positive effects through draft Policy 4: Human rights and equality which requires all planning to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, and seeks to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. Positive effects should arise from the focus on community wealth building (draft Policy 5) supporting a people-centric approach to local economic development. Benefits can be maximised where this is focused on areas experiencing economic inequalities.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

Alternatives

- C1.3.1 The draft Universal policies include key provisions aligned to wider statutory and policy requirements, including on meeting emissions reductions targets, securing positive effects for biodiversity, and on achieving Scotland's national outcomes (within the meaning of Part 1 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- C1.3.2 They also introduce new targeted requirements which apply to certain scales or types of development – this is the case for draft provisions on contributing to community wealth building and on enhancing biodiversity. It follows that were such requirements to apply to a broader or narrower range of planning applications, the potential benefits and / or any adverse effects identified may be either magnified or reduced. However, we do

not consider it possible to meaningfully assess differences arising from the scale of application of the draft policies, taking into account taking the level of uncertainty arising in the application of policy to individual development proposals, and in light of factors such as development viability which may affect policy uptake.

- **The Presumption In Favour Of Development That Contributes To Sustainable Development**

- C1.3.3 SPP introduced a ‘presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development.’ Paragraph 29 of the SPP sets out the principles of sustainable development, and paragraphs 32 and 33 explain how the presumption should be applied in development management. Paragraph 32 states that the presumption will be a material consideration for proposals that do not accord with up-to-date development plans. Paragraph 33 states that where relevant policies in a development plan are out-of-date the presumption will be a significant material consideration. Paragraph 33 also gives significant weight to the presumption if there is not enough ‘effective’ land available for housing development. In July 2020 the Scottish Government published a consultation paper setting out proposed interim changes to SPP, including the removal of the presumption. A subsequent December 2020 update to the SPP was removed following a legal challenge at the Court of Session in August 2021. Overall, views on the July 2020 proposals were divided.
- C1.3.4 Once adopted, the finalised NPF4 would replace SPP, including the ‘presumption in favour’. The draft NPF4: Sustainable Places sets out the need to rebalance the planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for plans and decisions. In drafting part 3 of the draft NPF4, the Scottish Government has taken into account new statutory requirements introduced into the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, in particular the new status of the NPF in day to day decision making¹. The policies also take into account, and align with, new and updated policy objectives including on climate and nature recovery.
- C1.3.5 It is recognised that there are a range of approaches that could be taken to updating planning policy in light of these wider changes. There is also the potential for changes to national planning policies to impact on all environmental topics. The nature and scale of the impacts will however depend on a range of factors, including the detail of the policy proposed, and the wider policy and statutory framework within which it would be given effect.
- C1.3.6 The discussion on ‘quality homes’ and on housing land requirements in the Liveable Places section below is also relevant.

¹ NPF4 will have the status of development plan for planning purposes. This is a change to the current position, and will mean that its policies will have a stronger role in informing day to day decision making.

C1.4 Liveable Places

20 minute neighbourhoods – local living

The draft policy aims to support development that contributes to the creation of walkable, liveable and thriving places that provide communities with local access to the facilities and services needed.

The draft policy notes this can be achieved by building on the Place Principle in the creation of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods - a method of achieving complete, connected and often compact neighbourhoods, designed in such a way that people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable walk, wheel or cycle.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓	Positive effects may arise long term through the creation of parks, green streets and spaces and community gardens.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Long term significant positive effects are expected to arise as a shift to more sustainable modes of travel should lead to reductions in GHG emissions. Incorporating blue green infrastructure into existing and new neighbourhoods can create climate change adaptation opportunities, aligning with wider placemaking aims of draft NPF4.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	Significant long term positive effects are expected through potential increased uptake of low and zero emissions modes of travel benefitting air quality, with positive effects also likely to be experienced at a local level. Uptake of more sustainable modes of travel, combined with green travel practices, should also lead to reduced exposure to noise pollution.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Overall, no significant effects on the water environment are expected from the draft policy. Secondary positive impacts could arise long term where modal shift reduces atmospheric pollution, which can impact on the water environment.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	

Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?√	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	X√	Potential effects are expected to be mixed and will be influenced by factors such as geographic location, soil properties and type of projects undertaken. There is potential for negative effects from new infrastructure. However these can be reduced through appropriate design and mitigation measures and where a focus is given to green infrastructure and broader environmental improvements. Positive impacts have the potential to arise where priority is given to the re-use and re-purposing of existing assets, particularly where previously developed sites are utilised, including vacant and derelict land. Additional benefits may also arise where from support for the creation of habitats, such as parks, and community gardens.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	√	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	Effects are uncertain. There is potential for temporary or localised effects arising from development of new or improved infrastructure, however the emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4 and the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, can reasonably be expected to limit potentially negative impacts. Additionally, there is an opportunity to maintain, restore and repurpose historic assets to support sustainable placemaking. Cultural activity can also drive local economy growth and benefit community cohesion ² .
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	0	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		

² Local Government Association (2017) People, culture, place – the role of culture in placemaking [online] Available at: <https://static.a-n.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/People-culture-place-the-role-of-culture-in-placemaking-WEB.pdf> (accessed 28/10/2021)

Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	0	No significant effects on landscapes expected. Potential for positive effects to arise over the longer term for local landscapes where development supports improvements. For example, where green infrastructure and broader environmental improvements are supported.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Significant positive effects are expected due to improved connectivity and emphasis on localism objectives.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Potential significant positive effects are expected. Health and wellbeing benefits arise where policies lead to more people walking, wheeling and cycling. Increased physical activity, improved access to outdoors, education, facilities and services, quality local green spaces are likely to have long term significant positive effects on physical and mental health. Potential shift to more sustainable transport modes should lead to improvements in air quality and reduced pollution and exposure to noise. Positive impacts could also arise from improved sense of place including societal benefits. The benefits of this could be maximised where focus is given to areas experiencing current levels of disadvantage.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Infrastructure First

The draft Infrastructure First policy supports an approach to planning which aims to put infrastructure considerations at the heart of place making. This approach is intended to support the provision of the infrastructure services and facilities that are necessary to create liveable and sustainable places. It can also support the drive towards a more sustainable use of infrastructure, making better use of existing assets and prioritising low-carbon infrastructure.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X✓	Potential for positive impacts where the draft policy leads to support for the sustainable use of infrastructure, including through making best use of existing assets. For example, where this leads to reducing the need for new infrastructure in the first instance, with associated benefits through reducing pressure on natural resources. Additional benefits may also arise from potential increased consideration of natural infrastructure ³ and nature based solutions to flood risk management, aligning with wider draft policy. Where required, new infrastructure or upgrades to existing infrastructure may lead to associated adverse impacts from construction and operation, including loss of habitat and disruption to habitat networks. Potential for negative impacts to be minimised through siting and design and enhancement measures applied in keeping with draft Policy 3 - Nature crisis .
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Potential for benefits to arise where the draft policy leads to support for greater sustainability in the use of infrastructure, including through making better use of existing assets and prioritising low-carbon infrastructure. This has the potential to lead to significant benefits through reducing associated GHG emissions. Positive effects are expected where
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

³ Scottish Government (2021) A National Mission with Local Impact: Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-2026 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-2021-22-2025-26/documents/> (accessed 29/10/2021)

		<p>infrastructure facilitates adaptation to climate change. Where the draft policy leads to infrastructure which facilitates a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, additional benefits may arise from associated reductions in emissions. Operational activities could also lead to associated emissions depending on activities, for example, more intensive use could give rise to increased associated GHG emissions from increased energy requirements.</p> <p>Additional benefits may also arise where the draft policy leads to greater consideration of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change to support the creation of liveable and sustainable places, with opportunities to align with wider draft policy on placemaking and natural solutions to flood risk management and blue and green infrastructure.</p>
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	?X✓	<p>Secondary overall positive impacts could arise. For example, where the greater consideration of the role of infrastructure in creating liveable and sustainable places, leads to co-location and sharing of resources, and in turn, reduced travel. Conversely, localised negative air quality impacts could arise where the draft policy leads to potential intensification in use of sites. This should be minimised through a focus on improved placemaking, including where opportunities are taken to align with wider draft policy on sustainable travel and transport.</p>
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	?X✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	?X✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?✓	<p>Secondary benefits may arise over the longer term. For example, where the draft policy leads supports greater sustainability in the use of infrastructure, including making best use of existing infrastructure, leading to reduced pressure on natural resources. Secondary positive impacts may arise where the draft policy leads to increased consideration of nature based solutions to</p>
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	?✓	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	?✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status	?✓	

and physical state of the water environment		flood management ⁴ . Additionally, there the draft policy leads to the development or upgrading of waste water treatment infrastructure, positive impacts may arise. Where undertaken, infrastructure developments have potential to create localised negative impacts on the water environment.
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?√	Secondary positive impacts may arise over the longer term where the draft policy leads to reduced pressure on natural resources. For example, where this supports making the best use of existing infrastructure, alongside opportunities for greater consideration of the use of natural infrastructure. Localised effects may occur associated with new infrastructure proposals. Effects would vary depending on geographic conditions, soil physical properties and type of projects proposed for development. Appropriate design and mitigation measures would reduce impacts.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	?	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?√	Where the draft policy leads to reduced requirements for new infrastructure, there is the potential that long term positive impacts could arise. There is an opportunity to maintain, restore and repurpose these assets to support sustainable placemaking. Additionally, in some instances, some infrastructure is also an important historical asset in its own right. Localised negative impacts could arise from infrastructure requirements, including on setting.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?√	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?√	Where the draft policy leads to reduced need for infrastructure, benefits could arise. There are also opportunities to improve local landscapes, particularly where focus
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and	?√	

⁴ Green4Grey (2020) Integrated planning for multifunctional land use [online] Available at: <https://green4grey.be/en/project-objective#integrale%20planning%20voor%20een%20veelzijdig%20landgebruik> (accessed 25/08/2021)

areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity		is given to restoration and enhancement to support the creation of liveable and sustainable places. Additionally, well-designed and managed green infrastructure assets, particularly those that engage local communities and which relate to landscape character and heritage, can enhance local sense of place and foster community spirit ⁵ . Localised effects may occur associated with new infrastructure proposals.
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Support for making the best use of and maximising existing assets before building new, should lead to long term significant positive impacts, including where this leads to reduced pressure on natural resources and generation of waste, aligning with circular economy principles. Long term positive should also arise from the draft policy emphasis on basing Local Development Plans and delivery programmes on an infrastructure-first approach and ensuring infrastructure considerations are integral to planning decision making, including where this leads to improved placemaking.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Potential for positive impacts where infrastructure considerations are embedded at the heart of place making and support improved access to goods and services, particularly to vital services such as employment. Wider societal benefits may arise where a focus is given to reducing barriers for individuals or communities with specific needs, and where inequalities currently exist. There may be opportunities to improve health and wellbeing through facilitating access to certain types of infrastructure and where consideration is given to active travel in infrastructure design, including through the use of natural infrastructure. For example, natural infrastructure can
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

⁵ Landscape Institute (2009) Green Infrastructure: connected and multifunctional landscapes [online] Available at: <https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2016/03/GreenInfrastructurepositionstatement13May09.pdf> (accessed 29/09/2021)

	<p>contribute to the quality of place and to wellbeing by supporting sustainable everyday living and strengthening community resilience⁶. Further, where opportunities are sought to ensure that current infrastructure is repurposed and reused in a way that meets wider or changing user needs or is multifunctional, benefits should arise.</p> <p>Potential benefits could be maximised where focus is given to areas experiencing current levels of disadvantage or where barriers to accessibility exist.</p> <p>Where implemented, natural infrastructure contributes to quality of place and wellbeing by supporting sustainable everyday living and strengthening community resilience⁷.</p>
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⁶ Scottish Government (2021) A National Missions with Local Impact Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-2026 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-2021-22-2025-26/documents/> (accessed 29/10/2021)

⁷ Scottish Government (2021) A National Missions with Local Impact Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-2026 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-mission-local-impact-infrastructure-investment-plan-scotland-2021-22-2025-26/documents/> (accessed 29/10/2021)

Quality Homes

The draft policy notes that good quality homes should be at the heart of great places and contribute to strengthening the health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities. The draft policy also notes that energy efficient, net zero emissions homes are required to help tackle climate change. The draft policy highlights the role delivery of homes has in supporting inclusive growth and potential to help build community wealth.



The draft NPF4 also proposes Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each planning authority in Scotland.

BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	Potential negative effects may arise, including loss of habitat and disruption to habitat networks housing developments. Effects on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability. Potential for negative impacts to minimised through siting and design and enhancement measures applied in keeping with draft Universal policy 3.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	0	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Overall positive effects are expected long term. Construction of new homes has the potential to lead to negative direct effects, for GHG emissions, however, the draft policy supports the incorporation of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy and waste technologies, thereby contributing to long term reductions in GHG emissions. Additionally, there is an opportunity to align with wider draft policies that support the use of construction materials with the lowest forms of embodied emissions. .
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Positive effects should arise where land for new homes is allocated in line with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods, potentially reducing travel requirements and associated emissions.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		

Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Effects on the water environment are uncertain. Effects will be site specific, and managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	X✓	There is potential for negative effects as use of additional land could result in soil sealing. Wider draft policies aim to encourage the re-use of existing buildings and use of vacant and derelict land, potentially reducing pressure on soil resources.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	?	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?	The emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4, including the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, should limit potential for any direct negative impacts to arise. Potential for positive impacts where opportunities are sought to bring historic buildings at risk back into use, including where consideration is given to their role in placemaking and town centre regeneration.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	Effects on landscapes are uncertain and will be influenced by factors including the location and scale of development. The emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4, including draft policy relating to Natural Places, should help to limit any potentially negative impacts and could lead to opportunities for improvements to localised landscapes.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	X✓	Positive, long term impacts are expected where this leads to the provision of good quality and energy efficient housing stock. Construction of new
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	

Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	developments could result in resource consumption, with potential to negatively impact natural material assets. Positive effects should arise where reuse of existing buildings and improved resource efficiency is supported and would contribute to promoting the principles of circular economy
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓✓	Provision of sufficient, good quality housing, linked to need and demand within an area, has potential to result in significant positive effects. Additionally, the emphasis on energy efficient homes has potential to contribute to reducing fuel poverty, with associated benefits. The draft policy promotes an equalities led approach and aims to ensure that specific needs are met, with homes adaptable to change and diverse needs and lifestyles. Significant benefits should also arise where land allocation is consistent with the principles of 20 minute neighbourhoods.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Sustainable Travel and Transport

The draft policy notes Scotland's transport system should contribute to the creation of great places through prioritising the need to reduce inequalities; taking climate action; helping to deliver inclusive economic growth; and improving health and wellbeing. It also notes that the planning system should support development that minimises the need to travel unsustainably and prioritises walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?✓	Potential for long term negative effects, including loss of habitat and disruption to habitat networks, associated with the construction of new transport infrastructure. Impacts on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability. Impacts will be managed at plan and project stages. Positive effects should arise where blue and green infrastructure and nature rich habitats are incorporated into design of new infrastructure, as encouraged in the draft NPF4. In keeping with national policy, biodiversity enhancement measures should be incorporated into proposals.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Potential for long term significant positive effects.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	Domestic transport was the largest source of net GHG emissions in Scotland in 2019 ⁸ . Reducing the need to travel unsustainably, managing transport demand and promoting active travel choices, has been recognised as vital to reducing emissions associated with transport ⁹ .
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	Opportunity to increase the resilience of the transport network to the predicted effects of climate change. Benefits could also arise from potential increased use of blue and

⁸ Scottish Government (2021) Scottish Greenhouse Gas statistics: 1990-2019 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-1990-2019/documents/> (accessed 15/10/2021)

⁹ Scottish Government (2020) Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/> (accessed 15/10/2021)

		green infrastructure which can play a key role in climate change adaptation.
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	Road transport in urban areas is a significant contributor to poor air quality ¹⁰ which can also impact on human health. Through seeking to improve consideration of the role that transport can play in reducing inequalities; taking climate action; and improving health and wellbeing there is potential for long term significant positive effects to arise. This could be of particular relevance in areas where air quality issues currently exist such as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and to those most vulnerable to the impacts of atmospheric pollution. Additional secondary benefits should also arise where a modal shift leads to improved air quality and reduced exposure to noise, particularly in urban locations. Reducing the noise impacts of transport directly benefits health, improves the ambience of street environments, and encourages active travel and human interaction ¹¹ .
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Localised negative impacts may arise from construction and operation of upgraded or new infrastructure and should be managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	Secondary benefits could arise where natural infrastructure is enhanced or created to support increased uptake of active travel.
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource	X✓	Potential for long term negative impacts where infrastructure requirements could

¹⁰ Scottish Government (2021) Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-2-towards-better-place-everyone/> (Accessed 15/10/2021)

¹¹ Public Health England (2018) Healthy High Streets [online] Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/699295/26.01.18_Healthy_High_Streets_Full_Report_Final_version_3.pdf (Accessed 21/11/2021)

and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland		result in compaction leading to loss of soil function. Secondary benefits could arise where natural infrastructure is enhanced or created to support increased uptake of active travel.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	The emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4 and the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, should limit any potentially negative impacts. Impacts will be subject to further consideration at plan and project consenting stages
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	0	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?X✓	Long term effects on landscapes will depend on the location of development, however the emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4 can limit negative impacts. Possible localised impacts will be subject to further consideration at plan and protect consenting stages.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?X✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Long term positive benefits are expected from the support given to making best use of existing infrastructure, including where this leads to reduced pressure on natural resources. Positive impacts should also arise where consideration of transport infrastructure capacity in the decision making process leads to an integrated transport system that supports multi-mode travel and improved placemaking.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓✓	Potential for long term significant positive effects to arise where draft policy leads to a reduction in traffic volumes. Road transport in urban areas is a significant contributor to poor air quality, which can be particularly
Promote and enhance/improve access to	✓	

open space, greenspace and the wider countryside		<p>relevant for the more vulnerable members of society including the very young and the elderly or those with existing health conditions, which makes air quality an important health inequalities issue¹². Further benefits may arise where the draft policy supports improvement of national and local routes that encourage increased uptake of active travel leading to increased physical activity.</p> <p>Ensuring the diverse needs of all population groups are recognised, and through increased accessibility to goods and services, especially vital services such as health care, should lead to positive impacts. This could be particularly relevant where a focus is given to reducing barriers for individuals or communities with specific needs.</p>
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

¹² Scottish Government (2021) Cleaner Air for Scotland 2 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-2-towards-better-place-everyone/> (Accessed 15/10/2021)

Heat and Cooling

The draft policy recognises the role of our places in helping to achieve zero emissions from heating and cooling our buildings and adapting to changing climates. It also sets out the role of heat networks in contributing to Scotland's net zero ambitions by using and storing heat from low or zero emissions sources, such as surplus or waste heat, heat from large scale heat pumps, particularly in conjunction with geothermal systems or bodies of water or clean hydrogen to provide zero emissions heat to homes. Examples of potential sources of waste heat include energy from waste, data centres, hydrogen production, the waste water system and industrial processes.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	0	Potential impacts on biodiversity are uncertain and would be managed at plan or project level. Possible negative effects, include disruption of habitats, habitat networks or species Effects on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	0	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Significant long term positive effects should arise from support provided for a transition away from more polluting forms of energy for the heating and cooling of buildings, leading to reductions in associated GHG emissions. Increased diversity of technologies within the energy network can also support reduced risk of disruption and increased resilience, including to the impacts of climate change.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Positive long term effects are expected where heat energy is generated from low or zero emissions sources, including through reducing associated atmospheric emissions from more polluting sources of energy. The draft policy notes domestic biomass energy systems should not be supported where networked systems are available. Additionally, where no alternatives are available, is it required that that the impact on local air quality and of smoke on neighbouring properties be considered.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		

Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?X	Overall, no significant effects on water are expected, however consideration may need to be given to longer term impacts on water quality from individual technologies for example, where water is used as a source of heat such as geothermal energy from minewater.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	Installation of heat network infrastructure may have negative effects on soils. This should be managed at plan or project level.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?	New infrastructure has potential to negatively impacts historic assets and their setting, however the emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4 and the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, should limit where potentially negative impacts could arise.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	There is potential for localised negative impacts associated with new infrastructure. These will be site specific and would be managed through the plan and project consenting stages.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Positive effects on built material assets may arise. Utilising surplus or waste heat from low or zero emissions sources is aligned with circular economy principles.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of	✓	

natural and built environment resources		
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Positive effects on population and health are expected to arise.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	Heat networks have the potential to provide sustainable and affordable forms of heat, which can help address health inequalities. For example, this has the potential to be of greater relevance to those experiencing fuel poverty.
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	Support provided for localised and community energy schemes also has the potential for long term benefits from increased resilience within the energy network.
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	0	Adaptation measures such as cooling are also likely to become of key importance, for example, due to increased occurrences and risk of extreme heat events.

Blue and green infrastructure, play and sport

The draft policy notes networks of blue and green infrastructure (such as green spaces, sustainable urban drainage systems, urban trees and green roofs and walls) are an integral part of successful places and can offer a wide range of benefits. Their role in supporting lifelong health and wellbeing, climate resilience, flood risk management, temperature regulation in urban areas, reduction of air and noise pollution, biodiversity and nature networks, while also supporting good, green jobs is also noted. The draft policy on play recognises the importance of providing play opportunities in the natural and built environments to support children’s physical, social and cognitive development, and uphold their right to play and relaxation.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓	Significant positive effects should arise from the draft policy, particularly where this leads to enhancement of multifunctional green networks which support net zero, nature-positive, and climate-resilient places.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Significant positive effects are expected where blue-green infrastructure which supports improved sequestration of carbon and increased resilience to flood risk.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

AIR

Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Overall positive effects should arise where green infrastructure is utilised, including where this leads to increased uptake of active travel options. Opportunities for benefits to be optimised where focus is given to areas where air pollution is an existing problem, such as AQMAs.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	

WATER

Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓✓	Significant positive effects should arise where the draft policies leads to blue-green infrastructure including sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and Natural Flood Management which can reduce the risk of surface water flooding from
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓✓	

Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓✓	development ¹³ . SUDs can also contribute to water quality objectives by reducing the impacts of diffuse pollution ¹⁴ .
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?✓	Development of new infrastructure may lead to soil sealing, however the overall positive effects on soils may arise through improved soil condition associated with blue-green infrastructure. Benefits may be maximised where areas of unused or underused land are utilised.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?✓	Mixed effects from this draft policy may arise. Development of blue-green infrastructure may negatively impact on known and unknown cultural heritage and historic environment features through ground disturbance. However, the use of blue-green infrastructure may also benefit the setting of historic assets and places.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?✓	The overall effects are uncertain and could be site specific. However, blue-green infrastructure can be used to improve landscapes, particularly in urban areas where vacant and derelict land exists.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	The emphasis within the draft policy on facilitating this type of infrastructure is expected to result in positive effects on natural material assets. Additionally, the “green” and “blue” features of the natural and built environment are widely
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	

¹³ Environment Agency (2021) Valuing the benefits of blue-green infrastructure. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-research-reports/valuing-the-benefits-of-blue-green-infrastructure> (accessed 18/10/2021)

¹⁴ SEPA (2021) Diffuse pollution in the urban environment (SUDS) [online] Available at: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/regulations/water/diffuse-pollution/diffuse-pollution-in-the-urban-environment/> (accessed 18/10/2021)

Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	recognised and valued as essential components of successful places ¹⁵ .
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓✓	Significant positive effects are expected to arise. Green infrastructure, including green networks, can encourage active travel, improve accessibility and connectivity, and can lead to wider benefits for health through increased physical activity and improved air quality. They can provide spaces to take part in sport, physical activity, play and other activities such as community growing, with the potential to improve mental health and wellbeing. Blue-green infrastructure can also provide spaces for social interaction and social cohesion through the creation of attractive open spaces.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

¹⁵ Nature Scotland (2019) the Place Principle – our contribution to place-based working [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/place-principle-our-contribution-place-based-working> (accessed 25/08/2021)

Sustainable flood risk and water management

<p>The draft policy aims to ensure places are resilient to future flood risk and to make efficient and sustainable use of water resources. It is also noted that the planning system should strengthen future resilience to flood risk by reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding, including encouraging the use of natural flood risk management to provide wider benefits for people and nature.</p>		
<p>BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA</p>		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?	<p>Effects on biodiversity may be mixed. There is potential for negative effects to arise where actions may disrupt natural processes and where built engineered structures are implemented. However, overall, natural flood risk management measures and blue-green infrastructure can provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity through the creation and/or restoration of habitats, as also supported by wider draft policies, and if undertaken at catchment scale.</p>
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓	
<p>CLIMATIC FACTORS</p>		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	<p>Significant positive impacts should arise through improved resilience and adaptation to flood risk and by reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flooding.</p>
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	0	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓✓	
<p>AIR</p>		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	<p>No significant effects are expected. Wider secondary benefits could arise through the role of natural infrastructure in improving air quality¹⁶ though the scale of this is uncertain.</p>
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	?	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
<p>WATER</p>		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?✓	<p>Significant long term positive effects are expected as this draft policy aims to reduce exposure to the impact of floods and</p>

¹⁶ Greater London Authority (2019) Using green infrastructure to protect people from air pollution [online] Available at: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/green_infrastructure_air_pollution_may_19.pdf (accessed 08/11/2021)

Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	✓	supports the sustainable management of the water environment. There is an opportunity to support River Basin Management Plan objectives to improve water quality status. Where built engineered structures are implemented, local level negative impacts could arise. These should be managed at plan and project level.
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?✓	No significant effects are expected. Potential benefits may arise if high value agricultural and carbon-rich soils are protected from future flooding. Where natural solutions to flood risk management are implemented, there is potential for secondary long term positive effects from habitat creation.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	?✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	?	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓	Positive effects are expected to arise where this leads to increased protection and reduced flood risk for cultural heritage and historic environment assets. Potential impacts on the setting of cultural heritage assets should be considered in the design of flood protection measures to avoid negative impacts and identify opportunities for enhancement and mitigation.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	No significant effects on landscape and geodiversity are expected. The use of blue and green infrastructure to support natural flood risk management can create opportunities for the enhancement of local landscapes. Engineered flood management or defence measures have potential to negatively impact some landscapes, depending on the type, design and location. Potential negative impacts would however be localised, and managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	0	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Significant long term positive effects are expected where this leads to improved

Promote the principles of circular economy	0	resilience, reducing the vulnerability of existing and future development to flood risk. Additional benefits could also arise from the potential to reduce pressure on existing water treatment assets.
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Significant benefits are expected through strengthened resilience to the impacts of climate change and reduced flood impacts. Where natural solutions to flood risk management are implemented indirect positive impacts can arise from habitat creation, including wider societal benefits such as access to greenspace and an improved sense of place. The impacts of climate change are likely to be disproportionately severe in areas of high deprivation because of the reduced ability of individuals and communities in these areas to prepare, respond and recover ¹⁷ .
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	0	

¹⁷ Scottish Government (2019) Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation programme 2019-2024. [online] Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-ready-scotland-second-scottish-climate-change-adaptation-programme-2019-2024/pages/9/> (accessed 21/11/2021)

Lifelong health, wellbeing and safety

The draft policy notes planning should support development that reduces health inequalities and supports long and healthy life expectancy.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	0	No significant effects on biodiversity are expected.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	0	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	0	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	No significant effects are expected.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	0	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	Significant positive effects should arise as the draft policy notes developments which would have a significant adverse effect on air quality or result in unacceptable levels of noise should not be supported.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant effects on the water environment are expected.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	

Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	No significant effects are expected.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	0	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	0	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	0	No significant effects are expected.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓✓	The emphasis of the draft policy on creating vibrant, healthier and safer places is expected to have significant positive effects on population and human health. Benefits could be maximised were efforts to tackle health inequalities are targeted to areas or communities experiencing the most disadvantages.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	0	

Alternatives

- **20 minute neighbourhoods**

C1.4.1 The pandemic highlighted the inequalities that can arise when amenities in a neighbourhood are insufficient. The '20 Minute Neighbourhood' is not a new strategy in urban design terms, but is the terminology that has become most recognised globally, gaining considerable momentum and support as a means of living locally with holistic benefits, for people, place and planet. A 'do nothing' option was not considered reasonable given the scale of the challenges we are presented with in recovering from the pandemic, tackling climate change, and tackling inequality.

C1.4.2 20 minutes (800m) is considered to be the optimum time/distance people are comfortable walking, wheeling or cycling to access services and facilities, taking account of the different abilities within communities. Whilst some might consider the time/ distance could be more tightly or more broadly drawn, research undertaken by Climate Xchange looked at applying the concept across Scotland, in all settlement types and scales. The 20 minute neighbourhood was seen as a flexible model which is the most applicable when taking into account the varied geography in Scotland. As a concept, it draws together the main objectives of NPF4 and is a means of working to the Place Principle to achieve climate resilience, improved health and equality by focusing on quality of place.

- **Quality Homes**

C1.4.3 New policies are introduced to set out how we will support the delivery of quality homes. The policy has been informed by extensive debate on the current (SPP2014) policy on planning for housing and takes into account new requirements introduced into the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, including on the status of NPF; and, new provisions on the time frame for the review of local development plans. The Act also introduced new requirements on meeting the housing needs of older people and disabled people. In light of this new legislative context and issues resulting from implementation of the current policy, the Scottish Government does not consider that retention of existing SPP policies on housing is a 'reasonable alternative'.

- **Housing Land Requirements**

C1.4.4 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, introduces the requirement for NPF to contain 'targets for the use of land in different areas of Scotland for housing'. The draft NPF4 meets this requirement through proposing Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirements (MATHLR) for each planning authority in Scotland. This introduces a long-term, strategic and public interest approach that consistently and transparently establishes the housing land requirement earlier in the plan preparation process. Were a different / alternative methodology applied in determining MATHLR, this could lead to either higher or lower requirements and consequently to either more or less housing land being allocated, the precise location and scale of which is unknown. It follows that the likely significant effects identified above, both positive and negative, are likely to be either magnified or reduced. Additionally, were a

different / alternative methodology to lead to lower housing land requirements, this may give rise to more speculative planning applications, and could create greater uncertainty for infrastructure planning and for communities.

- **Play provision; Lifelong health and wellbeing**

C1.4.5 New policy is also introduced on **play provision**, which seek to protect children's outdoor play provision and design-in new opportunities for play in the built environment. There is also new policy on **lifelong health and wellbeing**, which aims to create healthier places and requires a Health Impact Assessment of any proposals considered likely to generate significant health effects. It follows that under a '**do nothing**' option these new policies would not be introduced, and the likely benefits, including for population and human health, may not be fully realised.

C1.5 Productive Places

Land and Premises for Business and Employment

The draft policy aims to support a green economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, supporting good, green jobs, businesses and industries for the future. It notes ambitions to build a wellbeing economy that maximises economic, social and environmental wellbeing. The role of planning in supporting business, industry and innovation is highlighted, with emphasis on growth that is sustainable and inclusive and support the health and wellbeing of communities and environment.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	Potential for negative effects where increased levels of land allocation arise. However this can be minimised through consideration of wider national policies, including those related to biodiversity enhancement and making best use of existing assets where possible. Effects on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Indirect positive effects are expected from support provided for the identification of sustainable locations for employment land, infrastructure and investment, and promoting alternative ways of working that reduce travel.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	There is potential for negative localised impacts on air quality and noise from operation activities. The draft policy notes proposals will be supported where environmental impacts have been assessed and considered acceptable. Additionally, wider draft policies seek to reduce travel requirements, including taking an infrastructure first approach.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Generally neutral effects on the water environment are expected as a result of the emphasis on sustainable locations and placemaking, in
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	

Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	combination with wider draft policies relating to improved consideration of flooding risks and adaption.
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	Development in general has the potential to impact on soils through soil sealing. The extent of potential for negative localised impacts will depend on the nature and location of sites identified in the development plans. The draft policy notes proposals will be supported where environmental impacts have been assessed and considered acceptable.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	New developments have potential to negatively impact cultural heritage and historic environment assets, however the draft policy notes development proposals must take into account historic environment assets and their settings.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	0	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	0	Effects on landscapes are uncertain. Impacts at the local scale will depend on factors including the nature and scale of the development. Possible adverse impacts should be reduced by wider draft policy which supports an emphasis on placemaking, and should be managed at plan and project stages.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	0	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Positive effects expect from a focus on plans meeting requirements for employment land and infrastructure to support sustainable growth. Construction of new developments will result in resource consumption. There is an opportunity to make the best use of existing assets and ensure developments are energy and resource efficient, in line with wider draft policy.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to	✓	

support the development of high-quality places		
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Positive impacts should arise through aims to stimulate a wellbeing economy through meeting requirements for employment land, infrastructure and investment. Potential benefits should be maximised where development proposals take into account population health and wellbeing, including inequalities.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

Sustainable Tourism

The draft policy notes that tourism can bring a wealth of economic, social and cultural benefits to our communities, cities and regions, perpetuating growth and stimulating job creation. Challenges facing this sector, including the recovery from COVID-19, are acknowledged. The draft policy notes the role of the planning system in supporting the recovery of the sector, ensuring that communities have a share in tourism benefits and that tourism uses are sustainable and safeguard our environmental, cultural and community assets.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	Potential for largely indirect negative impacts arising where draft policy leads to new infrastructure requirements and increased visitor numbers, which can place pressure on habitats. Effects are uncertain at this stage and are likely to be influenced by the scale and nature of development, and the sensitivity of the receiving environment. Impacts would be managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	No significant effects on climatic factors are expected.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	0	Potential negative effects may arise from transportation and construction of new developments. However, the overall focus on climate conscious places and wider draft policies, including sustainable transport, aim to reduce emissions.
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	No significant effects are expected. Potential localised effects may arise from transportation where new tourism developments are considered to support sustainable growth of the tourism sector. However, wider draft policies including those supporting sustainable transport, aim to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant effects are expected. Potential localised impacts to be

Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	managed at plan and project stages where necessary.
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	New developments have potential to lead to localised impacts on soils, for example, through soil sealing. Impacts will be managed at plan and project consenting stages where necessary.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?	Increased visitor numbers may create pressures on cultural heritage assets, and new or extended tourist facilities may affect the wider setting of historic environment assets and sites. Possible local impacts will be managed at plan and project consenting stages. Additionally, wider draft policies, such as Historic Assets and Places, set out aims to protect and enhance assets.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	Potential to impact landscapes, however, the draft policy notes proposals should be compatible in terms of scale and nature of the activity with the surrounding areas.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Positive impacts on built material assets may arise due to focus on plans supporting the sustainable growth of the tourism sector.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to	0	

support the development of high-quality places		
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	There is the potential to create positive effects on employment due to the emphasis on supporting the sustainable growth of the tourism sectors. Benefits should also arise where the draft policy sets out that consideration is given to the capacity of existing facilities and services in areas where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts, to ensure proposals are only supported if satisfactory measures are proposed to alleviate existing pressures and prevent further adverse impacts. This has the potential to lead to benefits through ensuring the health and well-being of communities are maintained and potentially improved.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	?✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

Culture and Creativity

The draft policy recognises the important of culture and the creative industries to Scotland's wellbeing and cultural, social, economic and environmental prosperity. It also notes this can be an important catalyst for regeneration and town centre vibrancy that strengthens the sense of place.

The draft policy notes the planning system should support the expansion of Scotland's creative industries and ensure that there are suitable opportunities available for local communities to participate in artistic and cultural activities.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	0	No significant effects are expected.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	0	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	0	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	No significant effects are expected.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	0	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	Potential for positive effects where the Agent of Change principle ensures noise levels for new development in the vicinity of existing arts venues are managed.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant effects are expected.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	

Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?√	Positive impacts should arise where management decisions affecting places of cultural significance focus on avoiding or minimising adverse impacts ¹⁸ to support the draft policy. Particularly where consideration is given to the role these assets can play in placemaking and where the draft policy leads to increased awareness and understanding of cultural heritage and historic environment assets.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?√	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	0	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	?√	Potential for benefits to arise from draft policy aims to support the protection of cultural venues. Additional benefits should arise where greater consideration is given to the role cultural assets can play in providing a sense of place and aligning with emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4, including the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	?√	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	?√	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	Significant positive effects are expected. Attracting investment

¹⁸ Historic Environment Scotland (2019) Historic Environment Policy for Scotland [online] Available at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=1bcfa7b1-28fb-4d4b-b1e6-aa2500f942e7> (accessed 28/10/2021)

Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	into the cultural sector can help achieve outcomes related to health (physical and mental), the local economy (jobs and training) or quality of life ¹⁹ . Cultural activity can also drive local economy growth and benefit community cohesion ²⁰ . Further, the combined physical, social and cultural environment has an important influence on health and health inequalities ²¹ .
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

¹⁹ Local Government Association (2017) People, culture, place – the role of culture in placemaking [online] Available at: <https://static.a-n.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/People-culture-place-the-role-of-culture-in-placemaking-WEB.pdf> (accessed 28/10/2021)

²⁰ Local Government Association (2017) People, culture, place – the role of culture in placemaking [online] Available at: <https://static.a-n.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/People-culture-place-the-role-of-culture-in-placemaking-WEB.pdf> (accessed 28/10/2021)

²¹ NHS Scotland (2016) Place and communities [online] Available at: <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1088/27414-place-and-communities-06-16.pdf> (accessed 28/10/2021)

Green Energy

The draft policy notes that the planning system should support all forms of renewable energy development and energy storage, together with new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure. It should also support new and emerging technology including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS).



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	Potential negative effects could arise, including loss of habitat and disruption to habitat networks from the continued expansion of low-carbon and net zero technologies. Effects on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability. The draft policy sets out that potential effects on the natural heritage, including birds, must be taken into account. Potential impacts would be managed at plan and project consenting stages. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be identified at these stages, including through improved management of, and /or the creation of new habitats.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	The draft policy seeks to aid the decarbonisation of the energy sector through support for renewable and low carbon technologies with abatement. Potential for long term significant benefits to arise through support for increased diversification of the energy mix and energy storage leading to greater system flexibility and efficiencies, helping to manage fluctuations in energy demand and support resilience from disruption, including from the impacts of climate change. However, consideration will need to be given to where development could give rise to releases of carbon through disturbance to peat and carbon rich soils. This will require appropriate
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

		siting to avoid/reduce negative effects. Support for repowering existing sites can also help to reduce/minimise possible impacts.
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	Positive effects are expected where the draft policy supports a transition from non-renewable energy generation, which should also be beneficial for human health where this leads to a reduction in air pollutants. Scale of potential benefits will depend on factors such as level of uptake and type of technologies, but could be significant. Potential for localised implications to arise from operational activities depending on type of technology, such as, shadow flicker and low-frequency noise, potentially impacting populations in close proximity. Factors such as location and scale of uptake will influence potential effects. Design adjustments and planning conditions can mitigate potential impacts, for example through the consideration of matters such as hours of operation and noise attenuation.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?X	Renewable energy developments including hydro, offshore renewable have potential to impact the water environment. Technologies such as hydrogen and CCUS could also lead to implications, for example disturbance of the seabed and there is potential for accidental CO2 leaks. Hydrogen production is also reliant on water supply ²² . The draft policy sets a requirement for consideration to be given to effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk. Impacts should be also be managed at plan and project stages.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	?X	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?X	

²² Scottish Government (2021) SEA of Draft Hydrogen Action Plan for Scotland scoping report [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/environmental-assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/> (accessed 25/08/2021)

SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?X	Potential for negative effects to arise where developments disturb soils and their function. Impacts are likely to vary based on the type of development and the location, as well as the quality of soil, its condition and properties. Where peatland /carbon rich soils are present there is potential for negative impacts associated with disturbance, degradation, erosion or draining of functional peatland. The draft policy sets out a requirement that consideration must be given to potential impacts on carbon rich soils. Opportunities arise at individual project level through careful siting and design to minimise adverse effects and for restoration measures to be applied in alignment with wider draft policy. Depending on the technology, operational impacts could also arise, for example, through potential CO2 leakage from reservoirs and pipelines ²³ .
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	?X	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?X	Potential for negative effects arising from development of new or improved infrastructure. The draft policy sets out that the potential impacts on historic environment assets, including on setting, must be taken into account. Additionally, the emphasis on placemaking within the overall draft NPF4, including the requirements of the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, should limit any potentially negative impacts. Impacts will be managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?X	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	X	Long term negative impacts could arise from siting of infrastructure in

²³ Nature Communications (2018) Estimating geological CO2 storage security to deliver on climate mitigation (online) Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-04423-1> (accessed 05/11/2021)

Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	X	<p>landscapes, particularly where new infrastructure is required or the landscape is sensitive to visual impacts. Careful attention to landscape designation criteria and other sensitivity factors should help inform design and mitigation, to enable possible negative impacts to be minimised.</p> <p>Significance of impacts will depend on a number of factors, including location, scale of development, and area characteristics. For example, this could include the extent to which development is taken forward within the context of existing developed and industrial landscapes. In some instances, existing infrastructure may be reused.</p> <p>The draft policy sets out that the potential landscape and visual impacts, including possible impacts on wild land, must be taken into account. The construction of the new and refurbishment of existing pipelines, and near shore geological storage facilities where required, also has the potential to impact on the seabed floor and activities such as increased anchoring of vessels could lead to negative impacts on the seabed, including long term damage.</p>
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	<p>Significant positive effects are likely to arise where this leads to promotion of green energy technologies and greater diversification of technologies with the energy network, including where this leads to improved flexibility and security of supply.</p> <p>Positive impacts could also arise where opportunities are sought to support the re-use of infrastructure and extend lifetime operations, for example, through the repowering of existing wind farms, aligning with wider policy ambitions.</p>
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		

Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Overall positive effects should arise where the promotion of green energy supports a transition to net zero, with associated benefits for air quality. The significance of benefits will be influenced by factors such as scale of uptake, displacement of more polluting forms of energy generation and the individual technologies. For example, there is on-going debate on the association between health outcomes and those living and working in close proximity to wind turbine developments ²⁴ . Benefits can arise where greater diversity of technologies and energy storage leads to reduced risk of disruption, including from the impacts of climate change. For example, greater uptake of small scale local and community energy generation could be of particular relevance in rural, remote and fragile locations where there can be increased risk of disruption from extreme weather events.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	?✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

²⁴ Public Health Scotland (2021) National Planning Framework 4: Briefing on health and proposed National Developments [online] Available at: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4-briefing-on-health-and-proposed-national-developments/> (accessed 4/11/2021)

Zero Waste

The draft policy notes that the circular economy represents a significant economic and environmental opportunity to manage waste and resources in a way that contributes to Scotland's net zero ambitions and green recovery.

The draft policy supports development which reflects the waste hierarchy, prioritising the reduction and re-use of materials, and facilitates the delivery of new infrastructure required to achieve this.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	0	Significant long term benefits should arise where greater efficiencies in resource use leads to reduced pressure on natural resources.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	0	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Significant positive effects are expected. The draft policy emphasises the application of the waste hierarchy to prioritise the reduction and re-use of materials. This should lead to benefits through emissions savings, for example from manufacturing processes, the extraction of materials and those that arise from the disposal of waste to landfill. The draft policy also supports proposals for the capture, and distribution or use of gasses from landfill sites or waste water treatment plants.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	? X ✓	Overall benefits should arise long term through potential reductions in air pollutants associated with manufacturing processes and the landfilling of waste. Operational activities undertaken by some types of waste infrastructure may generate emissions to air, odour, dust or noise, and are subject to management
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	? X ✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	?	

		through existing regulatory processes. Significant effects on AQMAs are not expected from this type of development
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?X	Secondary positive effects may be achieved, including through the emphasis on reducing volumes of waste sent to landfill, thereby decreasing risks to the water environment. Additionally, reduced pressure on natural resources can also lead to secondary benefits
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	?√	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?√	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	√	Positive effects on soils may be achieved overall through the emphasis on reducing volumes of waste sent to landfill, thereby decreasing risks to soils. Potential benefits through support for the reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure. Additionally, reduced pressure on natural resources should also lead to secondary benefits.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	√	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?√	No significant effects on cultural heritage are expected. Overall, positive impacts could arise where the draft policy leads to the continued use and maintenance of existing cultural heritage and historic environment assets. There are opportunities to maximise benefits where this supports improved placemaking. The draft policy may result in increased infrastructure to support the circular economy, however, it is not expected these would generate significant effects
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?√	

		on cultural heritage, and would be managed at plan and project level.
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?X✓	<p>Infrastructure requirements can lead to both positive and negative impacts on landscape.</p> <p>Positive impacts could arise overall where the draft policy leads to making best use of existing assets, reducing pressure and minimising possible changes to landscapes.</p> <p>The draft policy may result in increased infrastructure to support the circular economy, effects on landscapes would be site-specific and managed at plan and project level.</p>
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?X✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	<p>The effects on material assets are expected to be significant positive.</p> <p>The draft policy emphasises the application of the waste hierarchy, prioritising the reduction and re-use of materials, and facilitating the delivery of new infrastructure required to support this.</p>
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/ infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	<p>Potential to have positive effects, including where this leads to greater efficiencies in resource use, benefiting the wider environment.</p> <p>Impacts to local communities associated with the construction and operation of new infrastructure to support the circular economy will be managed at project stage.</p>
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	?✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	0	

Sustainable Aquaculture

The draft policy emphasises the importance of the aquaculture sector, and its contribution to sustained economic growth, in the rural and coastal communities of the north and west. The draft policy supports the sustainable growth of the finfish and shellfish sectors, including by guiding new development to coastal locations that reflect industry needs and take into account wider marine planning.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	There is potential for overall direct and indirect negative impacts on species and habitats, particularly given the transient nature of some species. These may include displacement of native species from existing habitats, risk of parasite and disease transfer to wild fish, introduction of non-native species and altered genetic integrity of wild stocks arising from interbreeding with escaped farm fish. The draft policy identifies the need to guide new aquaculture development to locations that take account of environmental impact, including cumulative impacts, and wider marine planning, to reduce/mitigate potential negative impacts. The draft policy further notes that salmon and trout open pen fish farm developments on the north and east coasts of mainland Scotland should not be supported in order to safeguard migratory fish species. Potential impacts would also be addressed through the project consenting process.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?X	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	No significant effects are expected. Long term adaptation to climate change impacts would require consideration, in line with the draft policy on climate conscious places.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	0	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	?	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	There is potential for impacts associated with operational activities

Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	including noise, light, waste, aquaculture litter and odour. The draft policy requires fish farm developments to demonstrate operational activities are acceptable, and would be assessed at project consenting stages.
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	?X	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?	Aquaculture has potential to generate negative localised impacts on the water column and benthic environment. The draft policy aims to avoid significant impacts, through setting a requirement to take account of environmental impact, including cumulative impacts, to reduce/mitigate potential impacts. Potential impacts would also be considered during plan development and project consenting stages.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	?	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	Potential impacts are not expected to be significant and will be localised in nature, potentially impacting on the historic environment and its setting. This would be managed at plan and project consenting stages.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	0	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	0	There is potential for localised negative impacts on landscapes associated with aquaculture infrastructure. These have the potential to be site specific and would be managed through the plan and project stages.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	0	
MATERIAL ASSETS		

Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	0	No significant effects are expected to arise.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	The draft policy notes the increasing importance of the aquaculture industry by helping to sustain economic growth in rural and coastal communities. Potential impacts that could arise from operational activities, are required to be managed by requirements set out in the draft policy.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	?✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Minerals

The draft policy aims to safeguard important mineral resources and ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet the demands of industry in a way that minimises the impacts of extraction on the environment and local communities.

It sets out a requirement that local development plans promote sustainable resource management and identify a landbank of permitted reserves for construction aggregates of at least 10 years at all times in relevant market areas.

The draft policy notes that planning applications that seek to explore, develop and produce fossil fuels will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances, and that the Scottish Government does not support the development of unconventional oil and gas (UOG) in Scotland.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?	Potential effects on biodiversity are uncertain. Minerals extraction can have negative impacts on biodiversity. Impacts will be site specific and managed at plan and project consenting level. However the draft policy notes proposals should be supported where they will not result in adverse impacts on biodiversity. The draft policy also sets out that proposals should be supported where they include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare, with the potential for benefits to arise, for example, through habitat creation.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?X✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Significant positive effects through draft policy which restricts fossil fuel extraction in line with climate change objectives and wider Scottish Government energy policy.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
		Mineral extraction activities can lead to associated GHG emissions, through both the extraction process and transportation requirements. Potential for GHG emissions to be reduced long term where the draft policy leads to improved sustainable management of resources. Additionally, support provided in the draft policy for use of alternative modes of transport, such as rail and

		water, should also seek to minimise associated transport GHG emissions.
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	?	Significant positive effects through draft policy which restricts fossil fuel extraction in line with wider Scottish Government energy policy leading to emissions avoided. Mineral extraction activities, including transportation requirements, can lead to localised negative impacts. The draft policy requires proposals to demonstrate acceptable levels (including cumulative impact) of noise, dust, vibration and potential pollution of air. The draft policy also sets out that proposals should be supported where they minimise transport impacts through the number and length of lorry trips and by using rail or water transport wherever practical.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	?	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	?	Potential for negative impacts to arise from minerals extraction activities. The draft policy requires proposals to demonstrate acceptable levels of potential pollution of land and water. Effects will also require mitigation at consenting stage. The draft policy also requires that proposals include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare and that commitment is provided that such work is undertaken, which could potentially lead to secondary benefits through habitat creation.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	?X	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?X	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?X	Minerals extraction has potential to negatively impact on soil, including through direct loss of resources and impacts on stability. Effects will require mitigation at consenting stage. The draft policy also requires that proposals include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare and that commitment is
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	

		provided that such work is undertaken, which could potentially lead to secondary benefits through habitat creation.
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?X	Minerals extraction can negatively impact on cultural heritage and historic environment assets, including their settings. The potential impacts could be long term and lead to permanent loss of assets. The draft policy sets out to support development proposals that will not result in adverse impacts on the natural and the historic environment.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?X	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?X	Minerals extraction may impact on landscapes and there remains a legacy of landscape change in areas where extraction has historically taken place. The draft policy sets out that proposals will be supported where they will not result in negative landscape and visual impacts. The draft policy also requires that proposals include schemes for a high standard of restoration and aftercare and that commitment is provided to such work being undertaken. Impacts will be required to be managed at a local level.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?X	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	The draft policy aims to safeguard all important, workable mineral resources by promoting sustainable resource management.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	?	Minerals extraction could result in adverse effects on people, health and living environments. However,

Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	the draft policy includes a number of requirements that are aimed specifically at ensuring any potential adverse impacts (including cumulative impact) on any nearby homes, local communities and known sensitive receptors and designations are at acceptable levels.
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	?	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	0	

Digital Infrastructure

<p>The draft policy continues to support the roll-out of digital infrastructure across all of Scotland, recognising the importance of future-proofing infrastructure provision whilst addressing impacts on local communities and the natural and historic environment.</p>		
<p>BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA</p>		
<p>Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>No significant effects are expected. Infrastructure requirements have the potential to negatively impact on biodiversity, including impacts such as disturbance on marine and terrestrial mammals, fish and habitats during construction, and operational effects, ranging from temporary to permanent. Potential impacts are likely to be site specific and be influenced by factors such as route and sensitivity of the receiving environment. Effects on protected species may require mitigation, and would be managed at project level.</p>
<p>Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species</p>	<p>?X</p>	
<p>Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity</p>	<p>?X</p>	
<p>CLIMATIC FACTORS</p>		
<p>Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Indirect positive effects are expected. The emphasis within the overall draft NPF4 on facilitating digital infrastructure is expected to result in indirect positive effects on climate change mitigation objectives, by helping to reduce the need to travel through improved virtual connectivity. As described within the baseline section of this report (Section 3), domestic transport was the largest source of net greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland in 2019²⁵. Greater levels of remote and flexible working could potentially enhance national levels of productivity, reducing travel and associated carbon emissions²⁶.</p>
<p>Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.</p>	<p>✓</p>	
<p>Promote and enable adaptation to climate change</p>	<p>0</p>	
<p>AIR</p>		

²⁵ Scottish Government (2021) Scottish Greenhouse Gas statistics: 1990-2019 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-1990-2019/documents/> (accessed 15/10/2021)

²⁶ Scottish Government (2018) 5G: Strategy for Scotland [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/forging-digital-future-5g-strategy-scotland/> (accessed 30/08/2021)

Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	No significant effects are expected.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant effects are expected. Development of digital infrastructure and community hubs, installation of underground cables both onshore and offshore and have the potential to impact on coastal and marine environment with potential impacts likely to be site specific.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected to arise.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?X	There is the potential for individual and cumulative negative impacts on cultural heritage and historic environment assets. However the draft policy notes that the historic environment should be addressed, with careful design considerations to reduce any potential impacts. Existing regulatory mechanisms including Listed Building Consent apply.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?X	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?X	Telecommunications developments have potential to have negative effects on landscape. The draft policy notes telecommunications developments should only be supported where the
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of	?X	

valuable landscape and geodiversity		visual and amenity impact of the proposed development has been minimised through careful siting, design and where appropriate landscaping.
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Positive effects should arise from support provided to delivery of digital infrastructure, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Potential for positive effects on population and human health objectives where the draft policy leads to improved digital connectivity across Scotland. The focus on areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access could also support reducing inequalities and digital exclusion and access to getting online in the most deprived areas in Scotland is lower (82%) than in the most affluent areas (96%) ²⁷ . Benefits may also arise where the draft policy supports improved access to essential services including healthcare and education. Monitoring of radio waves is undertaken as a matter of course to ensure it complies with requirements and standards. A wide safety margin is allowed for within these requirements.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	0	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Alternatives

- **Sustainable tourism**

²⁷ Scottish Government (2020) Scottish household survey 2019: annual report [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2019-annual-report/> (accessed 18/10/2021)

C1.5.1 New policies are proposed on sustainable tourism, supporting the growth of the sector in a way which manages impacts on local communities in keeping with wider policy and statutory outcomes, and introducing new policy to manage short term holiday letting aligned to provisions in the Planning Act. A ‘do nothing option’ is not considered to be a reasonable alternative.

- **Culture and Creativity**

C1.5.2 New policy on culture and creativity recognises the importance of the sector, requires proposals to make provision for public art, and reflects the agent of change principle²⁸. Without new express provision the likely environmental effects identified including for cultural heritage and the historic environment; material assets; and population and human health may not be fully realised.

- **Green energy**

C1.5.3 Draft policy 19 takes a more permissive approach than the current Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) in actively supporting the roll out of renewable energy developments, other than in National Parks and National Scenic Areas, to help meet our statutory climate change targets. Wider restrictions, such as environmental designations, would still be relevant considerations and all applications would still require full site specific assessments, including Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Appraisal where applicable.

C1.5.4 It is recognised that an **alternative approach** would be to retain the current spatial framework set out in SPP. However, the Scottish Government considers that this more strategic approach could inadvertently rule out good quality development which is needed to meet our climate change objectives.

C1.5.5 It is difficult to predict in any meaningful way how impacts may differ between the proposed green energy policy and the current SPP, taking into account the level of uncertainty arising in the application of policy to individual developments. Nonetheless, it is likely that were the current SPP retained, benefits for climate objectives are likely to be reduced, however a greater level of protection may be afforded particularly to undesignated sites and species, including to wild land.

²⁸ [Agent of change: Chief Planner letter February 2018 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/04513_0123.pdf)

C1.6 Distinctive Places

City, Town, Commercial and Local Centres

The draft policy notes that the planning system should consider the economic, environmental and societal challenges faced by city, town and local centres, and address these to create centres which are vibrant, creative, enterprising, accessible and resilient places for people to live, work, enjoy and visit.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	0	No significant effects on biodiversity are expected from this draft policy. Indirect positive effects could arise from reduced development pressure on green spaces. There is an opportunity for secondary benefits to arise where blue/green infrastructure is incorporated, as supported by wider draft policy.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	0	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	?✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Reducing the need for travel and repurposing vacant properties could have positive effects in relation to the need to reduce emissions. Higher density within existing settlements can also support the implementation of low carbon technologies, such as heat networks.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Improved public transport connections may reduce motorised travel needs; and increased access to and uptake of low and zero emissions modes of travel are likely to have positive effects long term, including on local air quality. The draft policy notes alignment with 20 minute neighbourhoods and the need for proposals to take into account connections with public transport and active travel. This could be of particular relevance with many AQMAs in Scotland have been designated in, or close, to existing town centres.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		

Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Generally neutral effects are expected.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	Generally neutral effects on soils are expected. Secondary minor positive effects could arise by reducing out of town developments, avoiding additional soil sealing. The re-use of existing assets is also supported by wider draft policy.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?X✓	Effects may be mixed, and will be at managed at plan and project consenting stages. There is an opportunity to lead to positive impacts through support given to improving town centres, alongside making use of existing buildings. Benefits could also arise where consideration is given to the intrinsic cultural heritage value and importance of town centres and to use this as an asset upon which local distinctiveness and identity can be strengthened. Aligning with wider placemaking aims of draft NPF4 can help in providing a sense of place.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?X✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?✓	No significant effects are expected. Secondary positive effects could arise by reducing out of town development and focussing on making best use of existing town centres, in turn, reducing possible changes to local landscapes.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Potential for positive effects given emphasis on built assets, including

Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	where this supports improved placemaking and bringing vacant properties back into use.
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Generally positive impacts are expected from improving centres and responding to social and economic priorities, including through support for improved accessibility to key goods and services. The draft policy also sets out to avoid the additional density of non-retail uses that could have an adverse effect on health and wellbeing and promotes consideration of access to convenience goods/fresh healthier food and drink provision, especially in disadvantaged or remoter areas which could help improve diet through access to a variety of and healthier food.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Historic Assets and Places

The draft policy aims to protect and enhance the historic environment, and support the reuse of redundant or neglected historic buildings.

The draft policy also notes the planning system should protect and enhance historic environment assets and places and recognise their cultural heritage benefits and associated social, environmental and economic value to our national, regional and local economies, cultural identity, and for their potential to support health and wellbeing, the circular economy, and climate change adaptation.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?X	No significant effects on biodiversity are expected. The draft policy notes development proposals should ensure that existing natural features which contribute to the character of a conservation area are retained which may have potential positive effects on biodiversity. Support provided for the decarbonisation of historic environment assets could lead to secondary negative impacts. For example, the implementation of energy efficiency measures and low carbon energy technologies could lead to the disturbance of Protected Species through works to the building fabric of historic assets and places.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	0	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	No significant effects are expected. Where the draft policy supports the decarbonisation of historic environment assets, for example, the implementation of measures to enable energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of energy sources, potential positive impacts should arise from associated reductions in GHG emissions. The draft policy notes that Local Development Plans and their spatial strategies should identify, protect, manage and enhance historic assets and places, and consider climate change adaptation
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	?✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	?✓	

		measures, in line with wider draft policies.
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	No significant effects are expected.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant effects are expected.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓✓	The draft policy should provide significant positive effects by ensuring cultural heritage and the historic environment remains a key consideration in the planning process.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓	Positive effects on landscape are expected. This could include direct effects, for example, through the protection given to Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and also indirect effects from the commitment to protecting the wider setting of historic assets and places.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		

Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	The draft policy sets out to retain, re-use and/or adapt historic assets and places, aligning with circular economy principles, with potential for positive impacts to arise, in particular where opportunities are taken to consider the role of existing assets in supporting wider draft policy ambitions on improved placemaking.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	Generally positive effects are expected as result of the contribution that the draft policy could make to protecting and enhancing the quality of settlements and places.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Urban edges and the green belt

The draft policy notes the role green belts play as a settlement management tool around Scotland's towns and cities to help to direct growth to the most appropriate, sustainable locations. Their role in protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of settlements and providing access to green networks is also noted.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓✓	Significant positive effects expected. Limiting development on greenbelt has the potential to help avoid habitat loss and fragmentation.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	0	Potential for long term positive effects should through sequestration of CO ₂ , including through trees and woodlands and vegetated habitats. Green belts can be used to direct growth to the most appropriate sustainable locations, influencing travel needs and associated emissions. There is the potential for emissions reductions where commuting needs are reduced. However there are mixed views on whether green belts can conversely direct development out beyond their boundaries, potentially giving rise to additional and/or longer commuting times ²⁹ . Secondary benefits could also arise where localising food production could lead to reductions in associated transport requirements. Greenbelts can also support resilience and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	?X✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

AIR

²⁹ Scottish Government (2006) Review of Green Belt Policy in Scotland [online] Available at: <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20161020183614/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2004/08/19785/41555> (accessed 09/11/2021)

Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Secondary long term positive effects should arise as green networks can help remove pollutants including ozone, ammonia and particulates.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER AND COASTAL MARINE		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓	Long term positive effects are expected as green networks can improve water quality and flow management by reducing rainwater run-off, and retaining sediments and other contaminants from entering watercourses.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	?✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓	Long term positive effects are expected from reduced disturbance of soil resources. Additional benefits should arise where the draft policy leads to reduced infrastructure requirements through making best use of existing assets, including the use of vacant and derelict land, as supported in wider draft policy.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	?✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	0	Effects are likely to be positive as loss of green belt may affect the setting of historic assets and places. The draft policy notes development proposals should safeguard historic environment assets.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓	Effects are likely to be positive as loss of green belt may impact landscapes. The draft policy requires development proposals to be fully compatible with the surrounding established countryside and landscape character.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	The draft policy focus on protecting green belt should

Promote the principles of circular economy	0	have positive effects on natural material assets.
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	Long term significant positive impacts may arise through protecting outdoor access to green networks and where the broader benefits for environmental quality arise. Additionally, community growing spaces and access to locally grown food can lead to positive impacts, including physical and mental health benefits.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings

The draft policy notes that the reuse of vacant and derelict land and properties can contribute to climate change targets and support biodiversity, health and wellbeing improvements and sustainable, inclusive, economic growth by providing communities with much needed greenspace, growing spaces and other community benefits. It also notes that redevelopment for housing or businesses can also turn an underutilised and latent asset into productive use and limit the need for urban expansion.



The draft policy prioritises the use of vacant and derelict land and properties, including supporting temporary uses where proposals for permanent development are unlikely to be imminent.

BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓	Positive effects should arise through the proactive greening of vacant and derelict land, including habitat creation and reduced fragmentation, particularly where opportunities are taken to support biodiversity enhancement, in line with wider draft policy. However, consideration may need to be given to the potential displacement of species that might have colonised these sites. Benefits should also arise where the remediation of contaminated sites is undertaken. Indirect positive effects are expected due to the promotion of a 'brownfield first' approach which may reduce pressure on greenfield land.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Bringing land into productive use can also have positive effects on climatic factors through carbon sequestration, however the scale of benefits will depend on the type of redevelopment activity undertaken. For example, the creation of green infrastructure should lead to benefits through improved carbon sequestration. Minimising loss of greenfield land may also have secondary impacts through reducing
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

		pressure on assets that play a role in carbon sequestration. Additionally, the re-use of vacant and derelict land can also create more walkable and liveable environments, including through supporting active travel routes, with potential benefits associated with reduced GHG emissions where a modal shift arises. Potential for additional benefits to arise where remediation of vacant and derelict land supports climate change adaptation, for example, through broader benefits to ecosystem services leading to increased resilience or the provision of sustainable flood management infrastructure (e.g. SUDS).
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Secondary benefits could arise where the draft policy supports modal shift and habitat creation. Contaminated sites can result in potential for airborne pollution which can also have implications for human health and biodiversity. Positive localised impacts should also arise where remediation works are undertaken.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓	Effects on the water environment may be positive as contaminated sites can result in the pollution of watercourses, which can also have implications for human health and biodiversity.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	?✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓	Long term significant positive effects are expected from the 'brownfield first' approach, prioritising the use of vacant and derelict land. Additionally,
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	?✓	

Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓✓	significant benefits should arise where contamination is present and could be decontaminated through the development process. However, development can also impact on soils, for example by increasing soil sealing.
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓	Potential for long term positive effects on cultural heritage and historic environment assets due to re-use of buildings at risk and sensitive integration into development proposals. Additional benefits should arise where the draft policy leads to maintaining cultural heritage and preserving the legacy of former industrial landscape.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓✓	Potential for significant positive impacts through the restoration of vacant and derelict land, which has a poor landscape quality. Positive effects on townscapes may be achieved by reuse of vacant and derelict land, and redundant buildings.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Effects are likely to be significant positive. The draft policy seeks to re-use vacant and derelict land and redundant buildings as a priority, potentially reducing waste and consumption of new resources, aligning with wider draft policy on making the best use of existing assets and placemaking.
Promote the principles of circular economy	✓✓	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Positive effects are expected due to the promotion of redevelopment of vacant and derelict land, buildings at risk, and brownfield land.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the	✓	The draft policy requires priority to be given to establishing new

quality of the living environment of people and communities		uses for vacant and derelict land in, or adjacent to, areas where there are high levels of deprivation as identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Evidence suggests that communities in areas of higher deprivation interact with vacant and derelict land more regularly, with disproportionate impacts on their health and wellbeing. There is evidence of a spatial association between interaction with vacant and derelict land and impacts on physical health with regard to poorer health outcomes, population health and life expectancy ³⁰ .
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

³⁰ Scottish Land Commission Scotland (2019) Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland, Assessing the impact of vacant and derelict land on communities [online] Available at: https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf (accessed 03/11/2021)

Rural Places

The draft policy encourages development that helps to support, sustain and grow rural areas and stimulate economic growth and sustainability whilst safeguarding and growing the natural assets that underpin businesses and jobs. The draft policy notes rural economic activity, innovation, and diversification should be encouraged, while ensuring that the distinctive character of the rural area, the service function of small towns and natural assets and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	X✓	Potential effects could be mixed. The draft policy supports sustainable economic growth in rural areas, and associated development generally. It notes the need to safeguard and enhance natural and cultural heritage. Effects on non-protected sites and species are more likely, as designated areas will be protected through recognition of their value and vulnerability.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	X✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	X✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	?	Potential for increased GHG emissions to arise from possible increases in surface traffic. This could be of particular relevance as there can be heavy reliance on private car and road transport within rural and remote areas. The draft policy sets out support for critical infrastructure required to support transport or digital connectivity, minimising any potential increased emissions associated with transport requirements. Additionally, wider draft policies, including those related to 20 minute neighbourhoods and sustainable transport aim to encourage a modal shift more sustainable modes of transport. The draft policy also emphasises that development proposals should be consistent with climate change mitigation targets.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	?X	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	0	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	No significant effects on air quality are expected. Potential localised effects may arise from transportation where new
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	

Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	connections or improvement to existing infrastructure are considered to promote rural economic growth. However, wider draft policies including 20 minute neighbourhoods and sustainable transport aim to encourage a modal shift more sustainable modes of transport.
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	No significant impacts are expected.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	0	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	0	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	?X✓	The draft policy notes the importance of preventing the loss of prime agricultural or land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use except in specific circumstances. However, the overall emphasis on facilitating development in rural areas could result in higher levels of development. This could result in localised impacts through soil sealing, which may have cumulative impacts. Benefits could also arise where the draft policy leads to increased reuse of vacant and derelict land or “brownfield” where a return to a natural state is not likely, aligning with wider draft policy.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	?X✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	?✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?	There is the potential for positive effects on cultural heritage and historic assets and places. The draft policy notes development in rural areas should be supported where the proposal provides an appropriate use of a historic environment asset or is appropriate enabling development to secure the future of historic environment assets. However, the aim of facilitating more development in
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓	

		rural areas could lead to adverse impacts to the historic environmental and its setting, including archaeology. This should be managed at plan and project consenting stages. There is an opportunity to bring rural buildings at risk back into use, aligning with wider draft policy on making the best use of existing assets.
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?✓	Potential effects are uncertain and could be mixed in nature.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?✓	The draft policy notes development in rural areas should be supported where the proposals are suitably scaled, sited, and designed to be in keeping with the rural character of the area.
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	0	No significant effects are expected.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	0	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Potential for significant positive effects through facilitating development that supports sustainable and inclusive growth of rural communities and economies, while safeguarding and growing natural assets.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

Natural Places

The draft policy aims to protect and restore Scotland's natural environment.

It notes that the planning system should protect, restore and enhance Scotland's natural assets; make best use of nature based solutions; and actively support our national commitment to reverse biodiversity loss, and by facilitating the growth and connection of nature networks.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓✓	Significant positive effects expected where the draft policy gives rise to increased protection of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued natural assets, landscapes, species and habitats. The draft policy notes that spatial strategies should prevent fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore and enhance links which have been broken, including as part of wider green networks and active travel routes. Positive benefit should also be gained from integration of nature based solutions into development design. Protecting and enhancing the value of natural ecosystems in terms of the ecosystem services they provide in regulating the environment are also likely to have long-term positive benefits.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Long term, significant positive effects may be achieved through CO ₂ sequestration by protecting and enhancing the natural assets, contributing to wider targets for emission reduction.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Long term positive effects have the potential to arise as natural assets can improve air quality through the removal of pollutants including ozone, ammonia and particles.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	✓	
WATER		

Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓	Long term, positive effects are expected as natural assets can improve water quality and flow management by reducing rainwater run-off, and retaining sediments and other contaminants from entering watercourses.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓	Positive effects are expected to arise.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	✓	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓	Positive effects on cultural heritage and historic environment assets are expected from this draft policy.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓✓	Significant benefits are expected to arise long term. The draft policy supports protection of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued landscapes.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	✓✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓	Positive effects are expected where the draft policy leads to protection, restoration and enhancement of Scotland's natural assets.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		

Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Long term significant positive effects are expected where this draft policy gives support to protecting and restoring open space and natural environments.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Peat and Carbon Rich Soils

The draft policy aims to protect carbon rich soils and preserve and restore peat, including through restricting peatland extraction. The draft policy notes peat and carbon rich soils play a critical role in helping to achieve net zero targets through sequestration of carbon, provide essential ecosystem services for nature, people and economy, with a key role in adapting to future climate change.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓✓	Long term, significant positive effects on biodiversity are expected due to the draft policy intention to protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓✓	Long term significant positive effects should arise where the draft policy leads supports carbon sequestration by peat and carbon-rich soils. As peatlands are Scotland's largest natural carbon sink, however degraded peat can function as a source of carbon emissions ³¹ . Peatlands influence water regulation with intact peat bogs storing water. Natural and restored peatland provide reduced downstream flood risks, thereby contributing to climate change adaptation.
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓	Positive effects are likely where this draft policy gives rise to enhanced carbon sequestration by peat and carbon-rich soils.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓✓	Significant positive effects should arise as peatlands can play an
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	

³¹ NatureScot (2015) Scotland's National Peatland Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-national-peatland-plan-working-our-future> (accessed 06/10/21)

Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓	important role in maintaining water quality and regulation flow ³² .
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓✓	Significant long term positive effects are expected through focus on the protection of peat and carbon rich soils, including by restricting peat extraction.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	✓✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	✓	Protection of peats and carbon rich soils is likely to have positive effects on the cultural heritage, historic environment assets and their setting.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	✓	Protection of peat and carbon rich soils should help to minimise impacts on landscapes.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	✓	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Protection of peat and carbon rich soils has potential for long term, significant positive effects on natural material assets.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	0	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		

³² NatureScot (Scottish Natural Heritage) (2015) Scotland's National Peatland Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-national-peatland-plan-working-our-future> (accessed 01/10/2021)

Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	0	No significant effect are expected. The restoration and management of peatland can lead to multiple benefits, including indirectly where the income from this helps to maintain rural skills and employment ³³ .
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	0	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	0	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	?✓	

³³ NatureScot (Scottish Natural Heritage) (2015) Scotland's National Peatland Plan [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-national-peatland-plan-working-our-future> (accessed 01/10/21)

Trees, Woodland and Forestry

The draft policy aims to expand woodland cover, and protect existing woodlands, limiting woodland removal in association with development. It recognises the critical role trees and woodland play in helping to achieve net zero targets.

The draft policy also notes trees and woodlands provide essential ecosystem services for nature, people and economy, with a key role in adapting to future climate change.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA

Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	✓✓	Long term significant positive effects on biodiversity are expected. Benefits may arise as the draft policy requires Local Development Plans to identify existing woodland and potential for its protection, enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓✓	

CLIMATIC FACTORS

Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	✓	Long term significant positive effects may be achieved by through CO ₂ sequestration by trees and woodland. The scale of effects will be influenced by the scale of planting, and type of tree planted. Research indicates faster-growing, generally coniferous tree species can sequester carbon quickly in the medium to long term (<50 years) and can avoid indirect emissions in the very long term (>50 years) by providing renewable wood products and fuel to replace non-wood products that can involve high GHG emission in their manufacture. Whereas, slower-growing broadleaf tree species can accumulate high carbon reserves within the woodland itself in the very long term (>50-100+ years), but cannot provide the same indirect benefits by replacing non-wood products ³⁴ . The future development of Negative Emissions Technologies, for example, the use of biogenic feedstocks with CCS could also play a key role in GHG emissions reductions. Supplies of sustainable biomass, and competing
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓	

³⁴ Scottish Forestry (2020) Climate Mitigation: Woodland creation and management [online] Available at: <https://forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/climate-change> (accessed 05/10/21)

		<p>demands for this, could limit the potential for role of bioenergy with CCS.</p> <p>Potential indirect benefits where the draft policy leads to increased tree cover in urban areas as strategically placed vegetation can contribute to overall temperature regulation of cities³⁵.</p> <p>Potential for benefits to arise through the key role trees and woodlands can play in adapting to the impacts of climate change. Conversely, a changing climate, in combination with novel pests and pathogens, can negatively impact on these assets³⁶ which could impact on the ambitions of the draft policy. For example, in order to enhance adaptability and resilience of new planting programmes both the current climate and the relatively uncertain projections of the future climate should be taken into account.</p>
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	✓✓	<p>Long term significant positive effects may be achieved should the draft policy lead to increased tree cover, particularly in urban areas, as forests and woodlands can improve air quality through the removal of pollutants including ozone, ammonia, sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter³⁷. The scale of effect will be influenced by tree species and local conditions.</p>
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	✓✓	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	?✓	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	✓	<p>Long term positive effects are expected.</p>
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	<p>Poorly designed, managed, or unsuitably located woodland can have</p>

³⁵ Forest Research (2013) Air temperature regulation by urban trees and green infrastructure [online] Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/air-temperature-regulation-by-urban-trees-and-green-infrastructure/> (accessed 05/10/21)

³⁶ NatureScot (2020) Woodland and climate change [online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/land-and-sea-management/managing-land/forests-and-woodlands/woodland-and-climate-change> (accessed 29/10/2021)

³⁷ Forest Research (2021) Improving Air Quality [online] Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/urban-regeneration-and-greenspace-partnership/greenspace-in-practice/benefits-of-greenspace/improving-air-quality/> (accessed 05/10/21)

Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓	negative effects on water by exacerbating the effects of acid deposition, causing eutrophication, increasing sediment delivery, affecting water colour and contributing to local flooding. These impacts can be minimised through sustainable forest management ³⁸ . Appropriately sited and sustainably managed, forestry and woodland can provide many benefits including improved water quality, and flow management by reducing rainwater run-off, and retaining sediments and other contaminants from entering watercourses.
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	✓	Positive impacts should arise as forests and woodlands can lead to positive impacts through reduced soil erosion and regulation of water run-off. The expansion of forestry & woodlands, and activities including planting and felling, planting and harvesting, has potential to negatively impact soils by acidification, compaction, contamination and erosion ³⁹ . Disturbance from forestry activities can also result in altered nutrient dynamics, and can lead to increased soil carbon loss in peaty and carbon-rich soils, reducing its value as a carbon store ⁴⁰ . These impacts can however be minimised through sustainable forest management ⁴¹ . There is an opportunity to use woodland to decontaminate soils on post-industrial sites.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	✓	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	?	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		

³⁸ Scottish Government (2019) Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-forestry-strategy-20192029/> (accessed 05/10/2021)

³⁹ Forestry Commission (2017) The UK Forestry Standard [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard> (accessed 05/10/2021)

⁴⁰ Forest Research (2021) Woodland creation and soil carbon and nutrient dynamics [online] Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/soil-sustainability/woodland-creation-and-soil-carbon-and-nutrient-dynamics/> (accessed 05/10/2021)

⁴¹ Scottish Government (2019) Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-forestry-strategy-20192029/> (accessed 05/10/2021)

Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	? ✓	Increasing tree cover has potential to physically impact historic assets, and can change the setting. Effects are uncertain, site specific and will be managed at plan and project level. Planting in accordance with the Right Tree in the Right Place guidance should minimise negative impacts, and facilitate identification of enhancement opportunities. Depending on the species grown, there may also be benefits for cultural heritage. There are also a number of cultural heritage sites and features that are located within the forest or woodlands (typically scheduled ancient monuments) and sites and features of the forest (such as ancient trees, stands and landscapes) ⁴² .
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	? ✓	
LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	Increasing tree cover may change landscapes. Effects are uncertain, site specific and will be managed at plan and project level. Planting in accordance with the Right Tree in the Right Place ⁴³ guidance should minimise negative impacts.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Long term significant positive effects are expected on natural material assets where the draft policy leads to increased woodland cover and sustainably managed forests. Increased availability of locally grown timber may also promote its use as a building material.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	

⁴² Forest Research (undated) Cultural and heritage [online] Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/fthr/urban-regeneration-and-greenspace-partnership/greenspace-in-practice/benefits-of-greenspace/culture-and-heritage/> (accessed 29/10/2021)

⁴³ Forestry Commission Scotland (2010) The Right Tree in the Right Place [online] Available at: <https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/support-and-regulations/control-of-woodland-removal/the-planning-system/96-the-right-tree-in-the-right-place-planning-for-forestry-and-woodlands> (accessed 04/10/2021)

POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	✓	Long term significant positive impacts may arise where the draft policy increases provision of accessible woodland space which can be used for recreational purposes thereby providing opportunities to improve health and wellbeing. Increased tree planting can also enhance the environmental quality of urban areas and support adaption to the impacts of climate change, such as providing solutions to flood risk management.
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	✓✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓	

Coasts

The draft policy notes the role that Scotland's coastal areas and their communities play in supporting important economic sectors like tourism, outdoor recreation and food and drink. The draft policy also identifies a need to address the long-term resilience of some coastal communities against the impacts of climate change and notes the planning system should provide a framework for protecting coastal communities and assets.



BIODIVERSITY, FLORA & FAUNA		
Avoid adverse impacts to designated habitats and species	?	Impacts on biodiversity are uncertain, and subject to consideration at plan and project consenting stages. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity should be identified at project level, for example, through the use of natural solutions to flood risk management.
Avoid adverse impacts to undesignated habitats and species	?	
Protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity	✓	
CLIMATIC FACTORS		
Avoid new Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions	? ✓	The use of natural solutions for coastal flood and erosion management can play a key role in carbon sequestration, with long term positive impacts expected to arise. The use of built engineered structures often require materials with high associated embodied carbon, such as concrete. Significantly positive impacts should arise from the continuing commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The draft policy requires planning to consider the long term impacts of climate change and provide a framework for protecting coastal communities and assets. The draft policy also notes proposals in undeveloped coastal areas should only be supported if the proposal is necessary to support the blue economy or net-zero emissions, and that any such developments should be also be designed to have a very short lifespan or be
Reduce GHG emissions in order to meet Scotland emissions reduction target of net zero by 2045.	✓	
Promote and enable adaptation to climate change	✓✓	

		in a location that will remain supportable in the long term.
AIR		
Avoid adverse effects on air quality	0	No significant effects on air quality are expected.
Reduce emissions of key pollutants and improve air quality throughout Scotland	0	
Reduce levels of nuisance e.g. noise, vibration, dust, odour and light	0	
WATER		
Avoid adverse impacts on the ecological status of water bodies	0	Long term significant positive effects are expected to arise. The draft policy requires plans to recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and islands areas, and that a precautionary approach to flood risk including by inundation should be taken.
Ensure the sustainable use of water resources	0	
Reduce the number of people and properties at risk of flooding and promote adaptive flood risk management	✓✓	
Protect, maintain and improve the ecological status and physical state of the water environment	✓	
SOIL		
Safeguard and improve soil health, protect soil resource and soil functions of all soil types in Scotland	0	No significant effects are expected. The draft policy notes development proposals in undeveloped coastal areas should not result in increased risk to people of coastal erosion, including through the loss of natural coastal defences including dune systems.
Safeguard and improve high value agricultural land and carbon-rich soils	0	
Reduce the extent of contaminated and vacant and derelict land	0	
CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT		
Avoid adverse impacts on the historic environment and its setting	?✓	No significant effects are expected. Positive impacts should arise where the draft policy helps to reduce the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, as many historic landscapes and sites located in the coastal zone are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Any negative impacts on cultural heritage and historic environment assets would be minimised through application of the principles within the Historic Assets and Places draft policy, and would be managed at plan and project consent stages.
Protect and enhance valued landscapes, historic places and archaeological sites and other culturally and historically important features, landscapes and their settings	?✓	

LANDSCAPE AND GEODIVERSITY		
Avoid adverse effects on landscapes and geodiversity	?	Coastal defence measures have potential to impact coastal landscapes. The draft policy notes proposals should only be supported if consistent with any relevant coastal or marine plans with natural solutions utilised with any in-perpetuity hard defence measures demonstrated to be necessary. Impacts should be managed as plan or project consenting stage.
Safeguard and enhance the character and diversity of the Scottish landscape and areas of valuable landscape and geodiversity	?	
MATERIAL ASSETS		
Avoid adversely impacting on material assets	✓✓	Significant positive effects are expected due to the emphasis on protecting coastal communities and assets, with the coast and foreshore considered to be at particular risk, from both sea level rise and coastal erosion. The draft policy notes It requires a precautionary approach to flood risk including by inundation thereby minimising adverse impacts of flooding associated with climate change.
Promote the principles of circular economy	0	
Reduce use and promote sustainable management of natural and built environment resources	✓	
Promote the sustainable design, use and management of new and existing assets/infrastructure to support the development of high-quality places	✓	
POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH		
Reduce the health gap and inequalities and improve healthy life expectancy	?✓	Measures to address the long-term resilience of some coastal communities may create long-term indirect positive effects on employment with the draft policy recognising that coastal areas support important economic sectors including tourism, outdoor recreation and food and drink. Long term benefits should also arise where increased consideration is given to improving resilience to impacts of climate change, with coastal assets particularly, for example, from rising sea levels and coastal erosion. Where implemented, nature based solutions to flood management should also lead to
Promote and enhance/improve access to open space, greenspace and the wider countryside	?✓	
To protect and improve human health and wellbeing through improving the quality of the living environment of people and communities	✓	
Increase sustainable access to essential services, employment and the natural and historic environment	✓✓	

		benefits through creation of attractive open spaces ⁴⁴ .
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Alternatives

- **Urban edges and the green belt**

C1.6.1 Updated policy on urban edges and the green belt aims to protect countryside around cities and towns, and limits the circumstances where green belt development can be acceptable to specific uses. There are a wide range of views held on the role the greenbelt can play, with some stakeholders advocating for the most stringent protections whilst others argue for abolishing the greenbelt altogether. There were also differing views on the types of uses acceptable in green belt areas. The assessment identifies the potential for positive effects from the draft policy across the SEA topics, and it follows that without the draft policy these effects may not be fully realised. The assessment findings note there are mixed views on the role the greenbelt may play in commuting distances, and consequently in helping to reduce GHG emissions.

- **Natural Places – wild land**

C1.6.2 Draft Natural Places policy takes a more flexible and nuanced approach to wild land than the current Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), the overall objective of which is to open up wild land for more development where this supports rural repopulation and climate change targets, in keeping with statutory outcomes for NPF.

C1.6.3 It follows that an **alternative** approach would be to retain current policy on wild land as set out in SPP. However, the Scottish Government considers draft NPF4 policy 32 strikes an appropriate balance in protecting our natural places whilst meeting statutory outcomes on increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland, and on meeting emissions reductions targets.

C1.6.4 It is difficult to predict in any meaningful way how impacts may differ between the proposed policy 32 (i) and the current SPP, taking into account the level of uncertainty arising in the application of policy to individual developments. Nonetheless, it is likely that were the current SPP retained, benefits for climate objectives and in meeting population and human health objectives for sustainable access to essential services and employment may be reduced, whilst positive effects for landscape and biodiversity could be enhanced.

- **Peat and carbon rich soils**

⁴⁴ Green4Grey (2020) Integrated planning for multifunctional land use [online] Available at: <https://green4grey.be/en/project-objective#integrale%20planning%20voor%20een%20veelzijdig%20landgebruik> (accessed 25/08/2021)

C1.6.5 Currently, SPP sets a high bar for the protection of peat from commercial extraction. Building on this existing protection, and in keeping with statutory requirements in the Planning Act for the Scottish Ministers to have regard to the desirability of preserving peatland when preparing the revised NPF, the draft NPF4 introduces new restrictions on commercial peat extraction. The draft policy sets out that development proposals for new commercial peat extraction, including extensions to existing sites, should not be supported except in certain limited circumstances. Overall the draft policy aims to balance the highest levels of protection for peatland whilst protecting the nationally important whisky industry. It follows that, were the policy exceptions to be removed or further tightened, the potential for positive effects for the environment identified as arising from the draft policy may be further magnified. It is understood that peat extraction for whisky production is much less than that extracted for other purposes including horticulture.

- **Trees, woodland and forestry**

C1.6.6 We are aware of calls from some stakeholders for the introduction of new policy on 'buffer zones' around certain trees, including ancient and veteran trees. The draft NPF4 does not include such provision and we are not minded to introduce such provision, for the reasons set out below. Draft policy 34(b) does however include draft policy such that development proposals should not be supported where they would result in 'any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition'. It is considered that this approach will ensure high levels of protection whilst taking into account the circumstances of the individual case, including on matters such as topography, and of the condition of the tree(s) concerned, helping to avoid unintended consequences which could arise from a 'one size fits all' approach. This is complemented by the existing statutory duty on planning authorities, to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees. (Section 159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended).

C1.6.7 We are also aware of calls from some stakeholders for NPF4 to introduce targets for canopy cover. The Scottish Government is not minded to introduce such a requirement, for the reasons set out below.

C1.6.8 Whilst not every development proposal will be suitable for trees, there is an existing statutory duty on planning authorities, to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees. (Section 159 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended). The draft NPF4 includes provision such that local development plans should identify and protect existing woodland and potential for its enhancement or expansion. The spatial strategy should also identify and set out proposals for the development of forestry and woodlands in their area, in associated Forestry and Woodland Strategies, including their development, protection

and enhancement, in accordance with The Right Tree in the Right Place guidance.