



**Key Agencies Group**  
Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Meeting summary & actions

# Meeting Summary and Actions

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## Summary

Members of the Key Agencies Group met on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The meeting was chaired by Alasdair McKenzie of HES, hosted by Scottish Natural Heritage and took place at Silvan House, Edinburgh. Various topics were discussed including the Planning Act, and the work of the current KAG subgroups. We were also pleased to welcome guest speakers from Scottish Government to talk about the Planning Act Implementation programme and ongoing Digital Planning activities.

## Attendees

Alasdair McKenzie – Historic Environment Scotland (KAG Chair)

Anna Gaffney – SEPA (KAG secretariat)

Katherine Lakeman – SEPA

Adele Shaw – Historic Environment Scotland

Alison Baisden – Historic Environment Scotland

Fiona Rice – Scottish Natural Heritage

Morag MacKay – Transport Scotland

Sasha Laing – Scottish Forestry

Andrew McAllister – Forestry & Land Scotland

Kate Givan – Architecture and Design Scotland

Jamie McCracken – Scottish Enterprise

Katherine Pollard – Scottish Land Commission

Dave Bisset – Scottish Water

David Wood – PAS

Trevor Moffat – Improvement Service

Helen Fallas – British Geological Survey

Andy Kinnaird – Scottish Government (item 4)

Rhett Harris – Scottish Government (item 5)

## Apologies

Alan Farquhar – SEPA

Peter Hutchinson – Scottish Natural Heritage

Ivan Clark – Scottish Natural Heritage

Debbie Livingston – Systra / Transport Scotland

Amy Philips – Transport Scotland

Denise Angus – Transport Scotland

Amanda Marshall – Scottish Water

Claire Peters – SportScotland

## Action log

Action	Who?	When?
Alison Baisden to draw together a package of existing information from the recent KAG conference including FAQs, information and photos, to allow KAG members to use and share the content of the event within their own networks.	Alison Baisden	On-going and with input from Peter Hutchinson
Peter Hutchinson to contact the volunteers to begin drawing together joint KAG statement on purpose, principles and partnerships. Volunteers include, Peter Noad, Sean Caswell and Adele Shaw.	Peter Hutchinson	On-going
Interested agencies to contact Anna Gaffney on opportunity to join the joint customer survey.	All	On-going and with input from SNH, HES and SEPA
All agencies to review the planning performance, reporting and fees consultation.	All	ASAP
Trevor Moffat to feedback on relevant discussion points from HOPS meeting with COSLA on planning fees.	Trevor Moffat	Next KAG meeting
Alasdair to circulate the email sent by NACWG to wider KAG and agree a meeting date for them to attend to share their work and potential connections to the work of KAG.	Alasdair McKenzie	ASAP
Interested parties to contact Katherine Lakeman regarding involvement with Perth West Placemaking group.	All	ASAP
Alison Baisden will reconvene the Planning Performance Reports & Peer Review subgroup.	Alison Baisden	On-going
Anna Gaffney will arrange NPF 4 subgroup meeting early in the new year with relevant parties and share updates with wider KAG group as necessary.	Anna Gaffney	ASAP
All Agencies to begin the process of considering what are the key information/data requirements which they require during the review and assessment of land allocations or planning application assessment, to inform the further development of the Planning Gateway tool as being developed by the Scottish Government.	All	On-going

## Forthcoming meeting dates and locations

- **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2020**  
(Transport Scotland, Glasgow)
- **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2020**  
(tbc)

# Agenda

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10:00	1.	<b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b>
10:05	2.	<b>Planning Act and other updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from roundtable discussion on Major Applications</li> <li>• Planning Act implementation / transforming planning working groups</li> <li>• Joint Customer Survey update</li> <li>• Consultation on planning performance, reporting and fees</li> <li>• National advisory council on women and girls (NACWG) – invitation/request</li> </ul>
10:45	3.	<b>Tea and coffee</b>
11:00	4.	<b>KAG placemaking pilots – Forthside, Stirling</b> Katherine Lakeman, SEPA
11:45	5.	<b>Review of the housing land market</b> Kathie Pollard, Scottish Land Commission
12:00	6.	<b>HES Heritage Hub – link with Local Place Plans</b> Alasdair McKenzie, HES
12:15	7.	<b>Sub-group updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Skills &amp; training / Partner in Planning (Kate Givan, ADS)</li> <li>– Placemaking (Katherine Lakeman, SEPA)</li> <li>– Environmental Evidence (Helen Fallas, BGS)</li> <li>– IGOR: Inter-Agency Group on Renewables (SNH)</li> <li>– Planning Performance Reports &amp; peer review (Alison Baisden, HES)</li> <li>– NPF 4</li> </ul>
12:45	8.	<b>Lunch</b>
13:15	9.	<b>Planning Act Implementation</b> Andy Kinnaird, Scottish Government
14:00	10.	<b>Digital planning</b> Rhett Harris, Scottish Government  <b>Input to NPF4 data platform – joint approach</b> Helen Fallas, BGS
14:55	11.	<b>AOB</b> Alasdair McKenzie

## Meeting summary

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### 1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

### 2. Planning Bill Act and Other Updates

#### Feedback from Major Application roundtable discussion

Alasdair and Fiona provided feedback from the roundtable discussion on Major Applications hosted by Jamie Hepburn MSP and Kevin Stewart MSP which sought to outline some of the barriers and opportunities which existed within the major applications process. Alasdair advised that feedback from the meeting included that the business sector did not consider planning to be the biggest challenge in regard to their development aims.

#### Planning Act implementation / Transforming Planning working groups

The Group discussed the recent Planning Act – Transforming Planning working groups workshop which had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. A number of KAG members had attended this meeting, however it was noted that some had not received invitations from the Scottish Government. Following discussions between group members it was agreed that individual agencies should contact the Planning and Architecture Division (PAD) to advise of their interest in membership of any of the subgroups.

Those who had attended the meeting provided an overview of discussions of each subgroup. Alasdair did note that, while this already occurs, there was further potential for PAD to use KAG as a network for consultation for the development of Act implementation and there was opportunity to discuss the potential of this with the Planning Minister in our next liaison meeting.

#### Joint Customer Survey

Alasdair advised that HES, SNH and SEPA are preparing a joint customer survey together for planners to provide feedback on the services which we provide. This will ask some general questions about the Key Agencies as a whole and then provide an option to provide further feedback in relation to SNH, HES and SEPA – Alasdair noted that the survey was still open for other agencies to join however interested agencies should get in touch quickly.

**Action:** Interested agencies to contact Anna Gaffney on opportunity to join the joint customer survey.

#### Consultation on planning performance, reporting and fees

Alasdair advised that a draft of the consultation on planning performance, reporting and fees has been circulated to KAG group from PAD. The initial

draft contains questions on cost recovery and improved performance. The full consultation will be opened in January.

Alasdair noted that the forthcoming position of National Performance Co-ordinator within the Scottish Government will focus on whole system performance. He also observed a number of other topics including the introduction of fees for Listed Building Consent, questions on discretionary fees, charging for appeals and EIA developments. Alasdair encouraged everyone to review the draft consultation and consider the implications for the agencies and if any key issues in response to the questions should be highlighted.

Trevor Moffat noted that HOPS were intending to meet with COSLA to discuss planning fees further, including consideration of discretionary fees. Trevor advised he would feedback in due course.

**Action:** *All agencies to review the planning performance, reporting and fees consultation.*

**Action:** *Trevor Moffat to feedback on relevant discussion points from HOPS meeting with COSLA on planning fees.*

#### **National advisory council on women and girls (NACWG) – invitation/request**

Alasdair advised that KAG had been contacted the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) who were seeking to find out if KAG had done any work on considering how our work impacts women and girls. Alasdair advised them that whilst we had undertaken no specific work in this regard, KAG was increasingly aware of the policy impact which our work has on different groups and we would be keen to learn more from the NACWG how land use planning policy can influence outcomes for women and girls. Alasdair recommended that it may be beneficial for the group to come along to a KAG meeting for an information sharing session on the work of each other and the opportunities for progressing important policy agendas.

**Action:** *Alasdair to circulate the email sent by NACWG to wider KAG and agree a meeting date for them to attend to share their work and potential connections to the work of KAG.*

#### **4. KAG placemaking pilots – Forthside, Stirling**

Katherine Lakeman provided a detailed update of the KAG Placemaking group's activities at Forthside in Stirling. Katherine provided an overview of the background of Forthside, the development context and opportunity which existed for Stirling Council, the KAG placemaking group and other stakeholders to work together to create a place based, masterplan for the area. The purpose of the workshop was to demonstrate the value of KAG working together as a co-ordinated unit to deliver better outcomes for place and demonstrate the reduced spend of individual key agencies working on

larger scale projects such as masterplans and strategic development sites collectively.

Architecture and Design Scotland (ADS) facilitated an initial workshop for Stirling Council on Forthside in October 2018, with the most recent KAG workshop following up on this work in August 2019. The day included multiple presentations from different teams from across Stirling Council to provide background and outline ambitions for the site from different perspectives. ADS worked to co-ordinate outputs of the workshops such as the development principles and place opportunities to feed into the Forthside Masterplan Visioning Workshop document.

Katherine advised that she would be keen to replicate this approach with the strategic development site Perth West. Katherine reflected that this site presented very different challenges and opportunities, working at a landscape scale in multiple ownership.

The group discussed the benefits of the Placemaking subgroups work and raised a number of questions regarding the operation of this approach including how the Key Agencies would prioritise development sites, and where the responsibilities of seeking the involvement of the Key Agencies sat. There were also discussions on the application of this approach in relation to the new Planning Act including Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) and longer timescales for LDPs. The group concluded that many of these discussions and questions would develop over time as the benefits of this co-ordinated approach were realised in practice and outcomes would be variable in response to the differences in applications, development context and planning authority process.

The group agreed to consider their involvement with Perth West development proposals and advise Katherine of contact details for the relevant person involved from each agency.

**Action:** *Interested parties to contact Katherine Lakeman regarding involvement with Perth West placemaking group.*

## **5. Review of the housing land market, Kathie Pollard, Scottish Land Commission**

Kathie Pollard introduced Scottish Land Commission's (SLC) current review of the housing land market being led by David Stewart. The forthcoming report intends to look at house building land and strategic land banking in detail, with the purpose of the review to consider how the planning system can make better decisions on housing delivery. The review will also look at options for reform of the land use system and good practice currently taking place across Scotland to improve the delivery of housing. Kathie advised that SLC is keen to engage KAG on the review.

The group discussed the review in detail and identified some key issues which they had experienced in relation to housing delivery, such as planning for sustainable development, the role of land in the circular economy and understanding site allocations and their implications at a regional level. The group also identified a number of other organisations who may be able to provide helpful input to the review such as Homes for Scotland and planning authorities. Kathie concluded that it would be helpful for David to attend the next KAG meeting and understand some structured engagement with the group on the issue.

**Action:** *David Stewart from Scottish Land Commission to attend the next KAG meeting to undertake structured engagement on the Housing Land Market Review.*

## **6. HES Heritage Hub – link with Local Place Plans, Alasdair McKenzie, HES**

Alasdair advised that HES were currently developing a portal which would combine all existing HES portals for designation information in to one place. He advised that there are opportunities to partner with other agencies and that the portal could be built in a way that allows community groups and others looking to develop local place plans to display areas and buildings of local significance – together with existing cultural heritage designations and archived information – in one place, improving both accessibility and transparency.

**Action:** *Alasdair to circulate further information on the forthcoming Heritage Hub when available.*

## **7. Sub-group updates**

### **– Skills & training / Partners in Planning (Kate Givan, ADS)**

Kate Givan advised that a meeting between the subgroup, universities and RTPI was to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> December, with the purpose of identifying key issues around recruitment and retention within the planning profession. Trevor Moffat advised that Skills Development Scotland were also in the process of working with the Improvement Service to continue to develop skills within the profession and explore demand from planners as to what training was necessary to facilitate ongoing professional development. Trevor advised that he would pass this information on to HOPS to identify any relevant opportunities for input from the planning authorities.

Alasdair reflected that the timing of this was pertinent as the at the recent workshops with the Scottish Government regarding the implementation of the new planning act, as there had been references by Kevin Murray and others about the skills of future planners and how these would differ from those currently experienced now.

The group was reminded to continue to make use of the [Partners in Planning](#) website upload functionality for guidance and other updates as necessary.



**Action:** Trevor Moffat to pass on feedback from HOPS to Skills Development Scotland on training needs for planners.

**Action:** All agencies reminded to make use of the Partners in Planning website upload functionality.

– **Placemaking (Katherine Lakeman, SEPA)**

Katherine advised there was no further updates beyond that which she outlined under the presentation on Forthside, however if there was interested parties for potentially undertaking the same exercise with Perth West site please let her know.

**Action:** Agencies interested in participating in a KAG Placemaking exercise at the Perth West site, please let Katherine know.

– **Environmental Evidence (Helen Fallas, BGS)**

Helen Fallas advised that the Environmental Evidence team had continued to work closely with the Scottish Government Digital Taskforce to develop the digital planning tool which Rhett Harris from the Scottish Government would demonstrate in the afternoon of this KAG meeting.

– **IGOR: Inter-Agency Group on Renewables (SNH)**

Adele Shaw and Trevor Moffat advised that the HOPS subgroup covering energy and resources recently met and it was confirmed that HOPS were happy to have other attendees from KAG attend their meetings to advice on guidance updates and other relevant issues. There was no formal discussion of incorporating IGOR into HOPS subgroup (which meets quarterly). Confirmation on the status of the group and the continued liaison with HOPS Energy and Resources subgroup will be confirmed at the next meeting.

– **Planning Performance Reports & peer review (Alison Baisden, HES)**

Alison Baisden advised that as Planning Performance Reports would be due over the course of the summer, it would be an appropriate time to reconvene the group for collectively reviewing the reports for the 2019/20 period.

**Action:** Alison Baisden will reconvene the Planning Performance Reports & peer review.

– **NPF 4**

Alasdair advised that following the positive feedback from government in relation to the amendments of the scope of consent on Masterplan Consent Areas, it may be pertinent to reconvene a KAG subgroup to collate input from all agencies on NPF4. The group agreed for arrangements for the NPF4 group to be established in the new year, with the purpose of collating joint KAG input on key issues of interest.

**Action:** Anna Gaffney will arrange NPF 4 subgroup meeting with relevant parties and share updates with wider KAG group as necessary.

## **9. Planning Act Implementation, Andy Kinnaird, Scottish Government**

Andy Kinnaird from the Planning and Architecture Division of the Scottish Government joined the group after lunch to provide an overview of the ongoing work on Planning Act implementation. The session began with an overview of what the Act contains and Andy explained how priority outcomes as identified in the Planning Review guided the approach to the development of the bill.

Some of the key points discussed included the definition of planning within the Act, the role of Chief Planning Officers, the NPF/SPP status as statutory and more agile approach to regional planning via Regional Spatial Strategies. Other topics including the introduction of local place plans, the reconfiguration of Masterplan Consent Areas and fees and performance.

Andy emphasised that due to the considerable amount of new content in the Act, there was still a significant amount of work to do around implementation. He identified that the input of key agencies is greatly appreciated and influential in identifying the most effective ways of implementing the Act.

The group went on to discuss a number of specific aspects of the Act, including ensuring that all agencies were involved with the engagement workshops taking place on the implementation of different aspects of the Act. There was also discussion around the creation of new working groups for specific areas including housing and infrastructure. Whilst timescales could not be confirmed that this time for whether these groups would be implemented, Andy assured that the Key Agencies Group would be part of any discussions.

Alasdair thanked Andy for his time and advised that as a group, it was helpful to have regular face to face meetings with Andy and the team to understand how best to engage with the significant process of implementing the Act. Andy advised that KAG was an influential and important group to engage with throughout this process as would continue to regularly liaise going forward.

## **10. Digital planning Rhett Harris, Scottish Government and input to NPF4 data platform – joint approach, Helen Fallas, BGS**

Rhett Harris from the Scottish Government Digital Planning team introduced the work of the digital planning team in recent years and the relationship with the Planning Act. He emphasised the increasing importance of digital planning to promote increased public engagement with the planning system and the declining resource in planning teams and changing skillsets within the profession. He advised that the Scottish Government would be launching their Digital Strategy in June 2020, with headline commitments including the creation of a single Planning Scotland gateway tool. This centralised planning portal would be for use by both planning authorities, stakeholders and applicants, to receive and provide information for all types of planning proposals. The intentions behind this platform are to promote inclusive and meaningful engagement through simplifying access to documents, process and decision makers. The platform will also be connected to a range of other platforms and information systems and will integrate information from these in

to its operation. The portal will require continuous development to allow it to account for changes in guidance, regulation and to reflect the changing nature of land use.

Rhett then provided a demonstration of the platform, alongside discussion and questions from the group with regard to its operation. The group considered that currently there may be discrepancies between organisations and Scottish Government with regards to the way in which information is currently held. Additionally there would be licence considerations, particularly for map based information. These could be time consuming and costly problems if not addressed as soon as possible. Additionally in order to ensure that the platform works well for the Key Agencies, it will be important to reflect on what information we require to undertake our role at all stages of the planning process, such as development planning or application assessment. Therefore an action for all agencies to begin considering is what is the key data required to be on the platform and what are the key requirements which we ask of plans (both at allocation and application stages), which could be resourced through the platform. The group thanked Rhett for the demonstration of the platform, and Alasdair advised if further work from the group would be helpful to stay in touch and we met again as appropriate, perhaps once the digital planning strategy was out for feedback around Spring 2020.

Finally, the group briefly discussed the way in which agencies could support the development of the shared digital platform for NPF4, elements of which are already being progressed via the Environmental Evidence subgroup. It was agreed that the group should incorporate this into the forthcoming discussions we will be having around NPF4 in the new year.

**Action:** *All Agencies to begin the process of considering what are the key information/data requirements which they require during the review and assessment of land allocations or planning application assessment, to inform the further development of the Planning Gateway tool as being developed by the Scottish Government.*

## **11. AOB**

Following no AOBs, Alasdair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

