

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to seek member's endorsement of the officer submission of the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) (Appendix 1) to the Scottish Government. This is part of Argyll and Bute Council's continuing engagement in the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) preparation process currently underway.
- 1.2 The Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act has given NPF4 significantly enhanced status, including regarding infrastructure and economic investment. NPF4 will also provide a renewed focus on rural development, including rural repopulation and a stronger steer on housing delivery and diversification including the setting of targets on land for housing. It will also become part of the statutory development plan.
- 1.3 It is therefore critically important that Argyll and Bute participates in the NPF4 engagement to ensure that the Area's strategic priorities for infrastructure and economic investment are considered for inclusion in NPF4. It is also important to try to ensure that the policy that emerges in NPF4 has considered Argyll and Bute's unique context and needs.
- 1.4 A key part of the input into NPF4 is supposed to be Regional Spatial Strategies prepared by planning authorities. However, as the regulations are not yet prepared for these the Scottish Government has asked planning authorities to prepare **indicative** Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) by 18th September 2020, to inform the development of NPF4.
- 1.5 The indicative Regional Spatial Strategy that has been prepared for Argyll and Bute does not constitute a formal RSS under the terms of the legislation. It has been prepared based on existing up to date strategic thinking for Argyll and Bute, in particular drawing on the Proposed Local Development Plan 2, Economic Strategy, Rural Growth Deal and Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 input. It should be noted that the iRSS is only a re-presentation of the strategic spatial elements of these documents, all of which have already been subject to consultation and/or committee process.

1.6 The recommendations are as follows:

It is recommended that members note the content of this report;

Agree to endorse the officer submission of the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy appended to this paper to the Scottish Government as part of Argyll and Bute Council's continuing engagement in the National Planning Framework 4 preparation process;

Note that this submission is without prejudice to any comments the Council may wish to make at future engagement stages in the NPF4 process or the content of the formal Regional Spatial Strategy when that is produced.

Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) have been requested from Planning Authorities by the Scottish Government in a short time frame in order to inform the preparation of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This information will provide a strategic level input from Argyll and Bute into the NPF4 process. This information would have been supplied through a formal Regional Spatial Strategy (a new statutory requirement on planning authorities). However, due to timing issues the regulations for the Regional Spatial Strategies are not yet in place and a full strategy would take 1-2 years to prepare.
- 2.2 NPF4 has gained significantly enhanced status through the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act. It is therefore particularly important that Argyll and Bute participates in the NPF4 engagement to ensure that the Area's strategic priorities for infrastructure and economic investment are considered for inclusion in the plan. It is also important to try to ensure that the policy that emerges in NPF4 has considered Argyll and Bute's unique context and needs with remote rural areas, islands, edge of conurbation areas and as gateway to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.
- 2.3 The Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy has been prepared based entirely on synthesising the content of existing up to date Council thinking and presenting them in a manner that is requested for input to NPF4. It incorporates the strategic level priorities from the Proposed Local Development Plan 2, Economic Strategy, Rural Growth Deal and inputs to Strategic Transport Projects Review 2. All of these documents have previously been subject to consultation and/or committee process. This approach has supported the expedited delivery of an iRSS that only reflects the Council's existing strategic spatial priorities in an integrated manner.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that members note the content of this report;
- 3.2 Agree to endorse the officer submission of the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy appended to this paper to the Scottish Government as part of Argyll and Bute Council's continuing engagement in the National Planning Framework 4 preparation process; and
- 3.3 Note that this submission is without prejudice to any comments the Council may wish to make at future engagement stages or the content of the formal Regional Spatial Strategy when that is produced.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced a requirement for planning authorities to prepare Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). An RSS is a long-term spatial strategy regarding the strategic development of an area which must, for the region it is prepared for, identify i) the need for strategic development, ii) the outcomes to which the authority(ies) consider that strategic development will contribute, iii) the priorities for the delivery of strategic development, and iv) the proposed locations for strategic development. The strategy should contain a map or diagram to show the area and priorities.
- 4.2 The RSS performs two main functions i) the Scottish Ministers must have regard to any adopted regional spatial strategy submitted to them when preparing the National Planning Framework, and ii) a planning authority must have regard to their adopted regional spatial strategy when preparing a local development plan. However, it does not constitute part of the statutory development plan. The regulations for the RSS are not yet in place. An RSS would take 1-2 years to prepare.
- 4.3 **Indicative** Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) have been requested from Planning Authorities by the Scottish Government in a tight timescale in order to inform the preparation of National Planning Framework 4 currently underway. The iRSS had to be with the Scottish Government by 18th September and so it was agreed that an officer report could be sent with consideration and ratification from the PPSL Committee. This indicative version will not have the status of a formally prepared RSS. This means it will be submitted to the Scottish Government without prejudice to further comments Argyll and Bute may wish to make throughout the NPF4 process. However, the iRSS provides a

reasonable approach for the planning authorities to submit their existing strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities for consideration by the Scottish Government in the NPF4 process in view of the absence of formal RSS and the timeframe.

- 4.4 The Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy is shown in Appendix 1. This has been prepared based entirely on existing up to date Council thinking. It incorporates the strategic level priorities from the Proposed Local Development Plan 2 which is the “*settled view*” of the Council having been through significant consultation. It also draws from the Economic Strategy and Rural Growth Deal. All of these documents have been subject to consultation and/or committee process and align with the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Improvement Plan. This approach has supported the expedited delivery of an iRSS that only reflects the Council’s current strategic spatial priorities in an integrated manner.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government is currently preparing National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act has changed the nature of NPF4 giving it enhanced status. It will have a longer time-horizon, fuller regional coverage and improved alignment with wider programmes and strategies, including on infrastructure and economic investment. NPF4 will also provide a renewed focus on rural development including rural repopulation, which is the key priority for the Council (Single Outcome Improvement Plan). NPF4 will also give a stronger steer on housing delivery and diversification including the setting of targets on land for housing. For the first time, NPF4 will also become part of the statutory development plan, requiring to be taken into account in determination of planning applications and preparation of local development plans.
- 4.6 It is therefore critically important that Argyll and Bute participates in the NPF4 engagement to ensure that the areas strategic priorities for infrastructure and economic investment are considered for inclusion in the plan. It is also important to try to ensure that the policy that emerges in NPF4 has considered Argyll and Bute’s unique context and needs with remote rural areas, islands, edge of conurbation and as gateway to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Argyll and Bute input into NPF4 is critical in terms of supporting strategic infrastructure and development in the region into the future, in particular given the enhanced status of NPF4.
- 5.2 The iRSS in Appendix 1 summarises effectively the strategic spatial and infrastructure priorities in Argyll and Bute as agreed through previous consultation and committee process.

- 5.3 The iRSS in Appendix 1 does not have the status of a statutory RSS and is to be submitted without prejudice to the Council's further engagement in the NPF4 process or the content of the formal Regional Spatial Strategy when that is produced.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy : The iRSS does not have the status of a statutory RSS. However, it will help inform the NPF4 process which will result in policy implications for the Council. The iRSS reflects current spatial priorities as agreed through engagement and Council process.
- 6.2 Financial : None as a result of this paper. The iRSS has been prepared within Development Policy. However, the iRSS will inform the preparation of NPF4 which will indicate national priorities for strategic infrastructure and development investment.
- 6.3 Legal : None. There is no statutory requirement to prepare the iRSS prior to the regulations. The iRSS has no statutory planning status.
- 6.4 HR : None
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: (please refer to guidance on Hub): The iRSS is based on Proposed Local Development Plan 2 which has taken account of the Fairer Scotland Duty Act
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: The iRSS is based on Proposed Local Development Plan 2 which has taken account of equalities – protected characteristics
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: The iRSS is based on Proposed Local Development Plan 2 which has taken account of socio-economic duty
- 6.5.3 Islands: The iRSS is based on Proposed Local Development Plan 2 which has taken account of Island issues.
- 6.6 Risk: By preparing an iRSS at this stage the Council is able to engage fully in the preparation of NPF4, present a succinct picture of the strategic infrastructure priorities of the area and influence the direction of NPF4 which may not be promoted adequately without the iRSS.
- 6.7 Customer Service: PLDP2, the Economic Strategy and Rural Growth Deal have all been subject to consultation and/or Committee process. The Council would be fulfilling its customer service role by actively engaging in the preparation of NPF4 to ensure ABC issues are raised.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS)