



Key Agencies Group Meeting

Thursday 11th June 2020
10.00am – 12.30pm

Venue: Online

Meeting Summary and Actions

Summary

Members of the Key Agencies Group met on Thursday 11th June 2020. The meeting was chaired by Katherine Lakeman of SEPA, and was held online via Microsoft Teams. Various topics were discussed including the Planning Act and the work of the current KAG subgroups. We were also pleased to welcome Fiona Simpson of the Scottish Government to provide an update on NPF4. David Stewart from Scottish Land Commission also provided an update on the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce.

Attendees

Katherine Lakeman – SEPA (KAG Chair)
Debbie Livingston – Systra / Transport Scotland
Fiona Rice – Scottish Natural Heritage
Sasha Laing – Scottish Forestry
Kate Givan – Architecture and Design Scotland
Jamie McCracken – Scottish Enterprise
David Stewart – Scottish Land Commission
Alan Farquhar – SEPA
Alison Baisden – Historic Environment Scotland
Andrew McAllister – Forestry & Land Scotland
Helen Fallas – British Geological Survey
Irene Beautyman – Improvement Service

Apologies

Alasdair McKenzie – Historic Environment Scotland
Anna Gaffney – SEPA
Matt Lowther – NHS
Peter Hutchinson – Scottish Natural Heritage
Ivan Clark – Scottish Natural Heritage
Amy Philips – Transport Scotland
Denise Angus – Transport Scotland
Dave Bisset – Scottish Water
Amanda Marshall – Scottish Water
Claire Peters – SportScotland
Dara Parsons – Historic Environment Scotland
Adele Shaw – Historic Environment Scotland
Morag MacKay – Transport Scotland
David Wood – PAS
Trevor Moffat – Improvement Service

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
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
Alison Baisden will reconvene the Planning Performance Reports & Peer Review subgroup.	Alison Baisden	On-going
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
Alasdair to speak to Scottish Government about the Ryden research paper and findings and advise if further interim meeting to answer KAG questions on the recommendations of the paper is appropriate	Alasdair McKenzie	ASAP
Alasdair to speak to Ginny Sharp & Mike Shepherd to check if Transport Scotland can be included as a partner in the joint survey.	Alasdair McKenzie	ASAP
Sarah Shaw (HoPS) to enquire if Scottish Government attending next HoPS Development Management meeting and will advise KAG of their response to questions raised	Sarah Shaw	On-going
All to complete table as circulated by Anna regarding individual agency role, remit, functions and staff for Matt Lowther at Public Health Scotland to inform understanding of KAG input and role in planning system.	All	On-going
Katherine to circulate Service Level Agreement for Agencies to update as appropriate	All	

Forthcoming KAG meeting dates

- **3rd September 2020**
- **26th November 2020**

Agenda

10:00	1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies
10:05	2.	Planning Act and other updates (Chair) <ul style="list-style-type: none">– High Level Planning Performance Group updates– Joint Customer Survey update– Digital Planning Advisory Group
10:30	3.	Sub-group updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Skills & training / Partner in Planning (Fiona Rice, SNH)– Placemaking (Katherine Lakeman, SEPA)– Environmental Evidence (Helen Fallas, BGS)– Planning Performance Reports & peer review (Alison Baisden, HES)– NPF 4 (Katherine Lakeman, SEPA/All)
11:00	4.	Heads of Planning Scotland and KAG – Letter to Chief Planner regarding NPF4 and energy development Katherine Lakeman (SEPA) and Adele Shaw (HES)
11.15	5.	Scottish Land Commission – Update on Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce David Stewart (Scottish Land Commission)
11.30	6.	Update on Planning Act implementation / NPF4 and development planning Fiona Simpson, Scottish Government
12:15	7.	AOB / Close

Meeting summary

1. Welcome, introduction and apologies

2. Planning Bill Act and Other Updates

Planning Performance Group Updates

Katherine provided an update on the work ongoing around the Planning Performance Framework working group which has been focused on emergency planning legislation in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The service level report for Key Agencies had received positive feedback from Planning Authorities. Katherine suggested keeping this under regular review. The document can be shared on the HoPs Knowledge Hub website.

Work around digital engagement is being prioritised, both pre-application and development planning, following disruption from Covid-19. An interim position statement is expected later this year. Further discussion expected with HoPs around what priorities are.

Joint Customer Survey Update

Alison provided an update on this activity, with the scope to comment generally on Key Agency input into the planning system. Deadline for comments is 12 June. HES and SNH promoting on their twitter feeds and the survey will assist with the production of the PIF report.

Digital Planning Advisory Group

KPMG have been commission to work with RTPi to understand value of digital planning, and what the economic benefits of a world class online planning system are. Draft report expected for next meeting of group on 3 July 2020 and identifies saving potential for planning authorities and developers. Concern raised by KAG that it represented too narrow a piece of work that sought to identify money saving potential of digital planning and pass this onto developers rather than seeking to enhance planning and placemaking outcomes.

Katherine will circulate a copy of the presentation on the topic. Report not available yet but will be circulated in advance of meeting on 3 July.

3. Sub-group updates

- Pathfinder
Data Pathfinder focusing on data review, standards and governance. Producing a draft framework to utilise a national dataset which will link into the SEA process. Draft text being worked up which will culminate in a suite of reports. SNH, SEPA and HES mainly involved in Pathfinder. Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies may feed into this. 8 local authorities have been involved, with 2 involved in write up. Close collaboration with KAG would benefit evidence gathering. Draft to be shared by Helen when ready.

SG Policy team met late summer to discuss wider issues around priorities and what evidence is needed to develop them, which involved meetings with various KAG members. Factors such as improvement to emissions levels or loss of biodiversity could be measured at a national scale. Need to be viewed at a national scale, as amalgamating planning data from local level can provide skewed results.

- Skills & training / Partners in Planning (Fiona Rice, SNH)

No substantial update on this due to delay associated with Covid-19. Phone interviews proposed with KAG members and planning authorities.

- Placemaking (Katherine Lakeman, SEPA)

The three projects currently identified have not been progressing as quickly as initially hoped. KAG seeking to reinvigorate their offer of working with Planning Authorities through a letter offering its services.

Perth West; One part of site, which the Council had stated in its LDP should not be subject of a planning application until a comprehensive development proposal has been produced, has been the subject of a planning application. Council agreed to consider application due to its links with City Deal, employment generating potential and link to post Covid-19 recovery. KAG have identified areas where it can add value, and the Council and the landowner are interested in a future meeting.

Forthside; Despite a positive meeting last August with the Council, funding for production of a masterplan for the site has been pulled meaning progress is stalled.

Levenmouth; Making progress despite the Council officer leading the project being furloughed. Council is keen to take forward as part of the LDP and a workshop is scheduled for the summer.

- Planning Performance Reports

Alison advised end of July was the deadline for preparation of the PPF. HES is currently working up a draft. Each agency is to include commentary in the report around how they have adapted to Covid-19 and in what way their service has changed. This should also include the work of KAG sub-groups.

A peer review will be undertaken via Microsoft Teams in August, post submission of report. This will draw together a statement for the meeting with the Scottish Government in September which will enable a co-ordinated submission to local authorities. Environmental Evidence sub-group should be referenced. Alison is leading the work on this.

- NPF4

Following submission of joint KAG response, three sub groups have been formed. Evidence and Gatecheck; LDP Procedures; and Form and Content. Membership is to be agreed between the agencies for participation on the various groups.

4. Heads of Planning Scotland and KAG – Letter to Chief Planner regarding NPF4 and energy development

- Letter to Chief Planner

View from attendees was that the letter to planning authorities offering a collective and pro-active position from KAG was a positive and constructive step. Some concern was noted around the potential negative impact of environmental modification on listed buildings, as well as onshore windfarms. It was also suggested that the scope of the letter be broadened to engage on a wider basis than just sites. It was suggested the letter could be launched at the Place Standard meeting, or alternatively at HoPs or SLAED

Action; letter to be updated to be broadened out. Agencies to confirm they are content with being listed as co-signatories.

– Workshop on Energy Development

It was acknowledged that alignment between HoPs and KAG thinking on energy could only be beneficial and there would be benefit to a joint submission on energy development. However a difficult position was flagged with Scottish Renewables. Alison is to take forward.

5. Scottish Land Commission – Update on Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce

David Stuart provided an update on the V&DL Taskforce.

Consulting with KAG to improve recommendations. This will involve better use of data to focus on providing up to date records of sites. SLC are encouraging KAG and local authorities to adopt as accurate record keeping as possible by removing sites if they become naturalised or similar. SLC is also keen to encourage landowners to avoid redeveloping existing V&DL sites but creating new V&DL site elsewhere by other actions such as closing buildings or sites, so an holistic approach is essential. The imposition of Compulsory Sales Orders could also be used as a tool to tackle strategically important sites.

The aim is to have a more joined up approach to sites by ensuring that the V&DL initiative is a priority. Rather than a purely financial appraisal to the re-use of sites, focus more on wellbeing and inclusivity.

There is a key role for KAG and local authorities to address V&DL in placemaking, but also in establishing a Covid-19 recovery strategy, with the potential for the establishment of a sub-group. Recommendations for a refined V&DL taskforce are being sought by mid-August. Offers are being sought from KA to take part in the working group if they are not already engaged.

6. Update on Planning Act implementation / NPF4 and development planning

Fiona Simpson joined the call to provide an update on NPF4. It was confirmed a draft would be prepared for September 2021 due to the impact of Covid-19. In the interim a position statement would be published around September 2020.

7. AOB

Suggestion that KAG asks Fiona Simpson to hold a workshop with the group to discuss the various/leading nominations for National Development. Aim would be to contribute to decision making on National Development nominations before a decision is ultimately taken by the Scottish Government.

Further call was made for secretariat which is seen as a good development opportunity for a junior of a KAG agency.

Agreement that online meeting had been successful.