



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

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Dear Miss Ronald

Taking Forward the Government Economic Strategy: a discussion paper on tackling poverty, inequality and deprivation in Scotland.

The Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland is grateful for the opportunity to respond to this consultation which addresses ways of delivering economic growth whilst delivering the Government's three 'Golden Rules' of Solidarity, Cohesion and Sustainability.

The RTPI is the UK body chartered to represent the planning profession and offers these comments from the point of view of a diverse and policy-neutral professional body committed to supporting devolved government in Scotland. The Institute has approximately 2000 members in Scotland, working across all sectors of central government, local government, government agencies, the voluntary sector, private consultancy, the development industry and academia.

Since devolution, the Institute has empowered its RTPI in Scotland Office, together with its Scottish Executive Committee, with the responsibility for working with government and public bodies generally for the improvement of the planning system in Scotland. This is in accordance with its charter obligation to work for the public interest.

The Institute does not wish to respond to all the questions in the consultation paper. However, I hope that the following points, arranged under the relevant question headings, are helpful in taking this work forward.

Q1. Where can the Scottish Government contribute most to tackling poverty?

The Institute considers that a fully integrated approach across all policy areas and at all levels of government will be needed in tackling poverty in Scotland. Recent work on the links between health issues and planning in Scotland have shown that life expectancy, levels of illness and disease, and death rates are all substantially worse in areas of multiple deprivation even after variables such as age, gender, education and income have been taken into account.¹ At the local level these interrelations should be addressed in the local development plan as in the case of the recent East End Local Development Strategy and Glasgow City Plan 2 where the plan has focused on improving the local quality of life and on involving and engaging local residents in an ongoing dialogue about the future of their area.

At the national level, questions of how to address continuing pressure in Edinburgh versus continuing environmental degradation, poverty and health issues in the west of Scotland need to be further addressed in the National Planning Framework. It is suggested that there is a need to consider the degree of 'common economic space' across the two conurbations, and the basis of national policy with regard to growth poles or regional development principles. Attention will also need to be given to the particular circumstances and characteristics of the experience of poverty in rural areas. This would be in line with the priority given in the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy to achieving balanced growth across Scotland and giving all across Scotland the chance to succeed. The Institute supports the development of a territorial development index to include measures linked to social indicators of health; deprivation; employment change etc as a basis for monitoring and measuring change in terms of the economic strategy targets of solidarity, cohesion and sustainability.

Q2. To what extent are current policies and programmes fit for purpose?

The Institute considers that there could be closer integration between community planning and strategic and local development plans to ensure a clearer expression of joint policy, vision and initiatives across partner agencies. Community and development planning should be founded on principles of sustainable development and this relationship might be further addressed in statutory guidance on the sustainable development duty under the Planning (etc) Scotland Act 2006.

Q3. How should the Scottish Government maximize the impact of these policies and programmes?

There is a strong need to strengthen the 'social' component of sustainable development, to understand complex relations between economic, social and environmental factors, to build opportunities for social cohesion and empowerment, and for greater understanding of the relations of these factors with poverty, health, well being, quality of environment, education and attainment across Scotland.

Q7. With respect to the set of key principles detailed at paragraph 33 of the discussion paper what are your views on the following:

• Are they the right principles?

These principles appear reasonable, but some tend to overlap and might be simplified; others may also be considered (see below)

¹ M Higgins 'Creating healthy, supportive environments' the Scottish Planner June 2008, p 6; and the Sir Patrick Geddes Commemorative Lecture given by Dr Harry Burns 4th June 2008 in Scottish Planner June 2008 p 1.

- **Are there others that the Scottish Government should be adopting?**

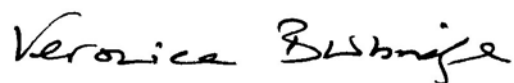
The Government might also consider the importance of local environments, including issues of environmental justice and the encouragement of positive and supportive surroundings.

- **How should the Scottish Government ensure that they are in turn adopted by key delivery bodies and agencies?**

Principles could be agreed and adopted through the community planning process. Strong links with policies within the development plan could reflect key agency input and provide supportive action on housing, employment, transport, greenspace local environments etc.

The Institute trusts that these comments are of assistance and has no objection to its comments being made available to the public in the usual way. Should you wish any clarification please do not hesitate to contact me at the RTPi Scotland, Edinburgh office: 57 Melville Street Edinburgh, EH3 7HL phone: 0131 226 1959, email: veronica.burbridge@rtpi.org.uk

Yours sincerely



Veronica Burbridge

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