

UN Sustainable Development Goal Delivery in Scotland: Call for Evidence

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SCOTLAND**



What this survey is

This survey is one of a number of ways in which we are engaging with people across Scotland on Scotland's National Outcomes, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how best to approach achieving them.

Your views will inform development of our overall approach to implementing the National Outcomes and SDGs in Scotland as well as how we will report on this within the UK Government Voluntary National Review (VNR).

You can read more about the SDGs and VNR on the SDG Network Scotland website.

How to respond

You can respond to this survey by **Wednesday 27 February** if you would like to inform development of the UK Government Voluntary National Review (VNR).

Most of this survey take the form of open text responses to prompt questions. This allows flexibility in how you respond. However we would be grateful if you could address your responses to the prompt questions as much as possible.

This survey will remain open after that point until **Friday 29 March** if you are not interested in or unable to contribute to the UK VNR deadline but would like to inform longer term considerations around SDG implementation in Scotland, including a potential Scottish Supplementary Review.

You can either complete the questions in this document and return it by email to nationalperformance@gov.scot or [complete the online version of the survey](#). The questions are the same in both.

Confidentiality

Responses from individuals will be treated confidentially and the data held securely. You will be asked during the survey if you consent for your response to the call to be published on <https://globalgoals.scot> once the exercise is complete.

Organisational responses providing potential content for the VNR may necessarily involve identifying specific organisations or sectors for Scotland's VNR contribution (for example, in terms of describing networks and partnerships working to realise the Goals).

1. Your details

Please indicate if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation:

I am responding on behalf of an organisation

Your name

Claire Pollock

Your organisation (if responding on behalf of an organisation)

RTPI Scotland

Email address

scotland@rtpi.org.uk

Are you a member of the SDG Network Scotland?

Yes

Please indicate if you are happy to be contacted by the SDG Network Scotland about further opportunities to participate in the SDG agenda

I am happy to be contacted by the SDG Network Scotland

2. Scotland's approach to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030

Through the VNR we are expected to report on the national policy and delivery infrastructure we currently have in place to progress the SDGs.

In this section we would like to seek your views on the effectiveness of this and what improvements you think need to be made.

What are you doing?

Please tell us what actions or projects you are currently undertaking to encourage others to be involved with meeting the [SDGs](#).

These can be small or large. Local, national or international.

When responding, please include detail on (where possible):

- **Name** of the project (and a web address if available)
- The project's **purpose**
- The **SDG Goals or targets it contributes to**
- Your observations **on its results, learning, or challenges**

The Royal Town Planning Institute is the UK's leading planning body for spatial, sustainable and inclusive planning and is the largest planning institute in Europe with over 25,000 members. With our international planning and other built environment partners and memberships we continue to promote the role that good planning and skilled planners can play in helping to deliver on these global commitments and implement sustainable development. Our work in relation to the SDGs is based within the context of policy debates, establishing new approaches and influencing national planning policy. Everything we do is inspired by our mission to advance the art and science of town and country planning for the benefit of the public. We champion the role of spatial planning that gives people a real say in shaping the places where they live and work and ensure that sustainability is at the heart of everything we do.

3. How is Scotland doing in relation to each SDG?



This section asks you to focus on Scotland's performance and delivery of each of the 17 UN SDGs and their related targets.

GOAL 1: No Poverty



Please tell us how well you think Scotland is progressing towards achieving this goal and related targets: What is your view of the evidence we have on this Goal, and what does your experience tell us about progress on this Goal?

RTPI Scotland agree that Scotland is progressing steadily towards this goal of ending poverty, however we believe that there are areas which could benefit from more attention. We would also like to highlight the relevance of planning as a tool to prevent poverty and drive inclusive growth.

What do you think are the significant programmes, actions, strategies, and policies currently in place to help deliver this Goal in Scotland (of any scale) and what have they achieved?

The evidence provided on this goal states that: “there are no obvious or clear deficiencies in delivery around poverty alleviation and coverage of the social protection floor at the Scottish level”. However, in contrast to this, RTPI Scotland highlight that large discrepancies in life expectancy still exist between poor and wealthy areas within the same local authorities in Scotland. In Scotland, nearly one third of the most deprived areas are in one city - Glasgow (despite deprivation having become less concentrated over time). This would therefore suggest that there are deficiencies in poverty alleviation at a spatial level. In addition to this, the social protection floor is intended to ensure: “all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.” This however, has arguably not been achieved at a regional level. Discrepancies in life expectancy, job opportunities and low school attainments can still be seen in areas of concentrated poverty and limit the ability of impoverished residents to access essential health care and income security.

Place, as much if not more than individual characteristics, can undermine people’s ability to fulfil their potential. The psychological effects of persistent deprivation play a cyclical role in perpetuating individual and household poverty, and can have wider effects on neighbourhoods, for instance through crime. Indeed, the persistence of poverty in time may be as much a problem as its spatial concentration. Rather than accepting that ‘segregation’ is inevitable and adopting a fatalistic view of places, we would do better to recognise that people are affected by the context in which they live and affect it in return. It can therefore be argued that environment can be a major component of poverty, and improving places in ways which reduce inequality as well as support people individually. In short, where you live matters as well as who you are. Investing in good quality place making and joining up relevant planning policy documents such as the National Planning Framework 3; Scottish Planning Policy, Strategic Development Plans and Local Development Plans can help deliver strategies to eradicate place-based poverty.

RTPI Scotland would like to stress that considering spatial factors when addressing the causes of poverty aligns with contemporary global policy for poverty eradication and reduction of inequality. Individual and income based programmes to eradicating poverty are unlikely to be sufficient and must be supplemented by or framed within place based approaches. This can include identifying protocols to define minimum place quality standards. The continued use of the Place Standard Tool is supported by RTPI Scotland as an effective strategy for addressing causes of inequality within a place and providing a framework for the assessment and improvement of new and existing places. We are also committed to collaboratively working within the context of the place principle which states that: “All those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places”. Going forward it is important, to aid its implementation, true interdisciplinary buy-in from all the key stakeholders is required. In order to ensure the delivery of this policy mechanism need set in place to ensure the principle is delivered, including evaluation frameworks and enforcement measures.

RTPI Scotland agree that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 is a useful tool for reducing inequalities, particularly through the participation of socio-economically disadvantaged groups in community planning partnerships. Scottish Government supports this approach via several initiatives aiming at creating positive physical environments, approaching health in an integrated manner and ‘co-producing’ urban health. For example, the Equally Well Govanhill (EWG) test site was a localised partnership approach involving the public and third sectors aiming to improve life quality and environmental conditions in this area of Glasgow. Established service structures have limitations when approaching complex issues such as health inequalities. The EWG test site has shown the importance of participation and empowerment, including participatory budgeting and ‘community anchors’ (community-based organisations involved in public health interventions). This in itself is not enough to improve local outcomes and eradicate poverty, although it may help reduce regional discrepancies as well as further Scotland’s progress in attaining SGD3.

GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being



Please tell us how well you think Scotland is progressing towards achieving this goal and related targets: What is your view of the evidence we have on this Goal, and what does your experience tell us about progress on this Goal?

RTPI Scotland agree that Scotland is doing well to meet the Good Health and Well-Being SDG in areas such as maternal and child mortality. However inequalities in health and well-being between different locations across the country continue to rise. Whilst mortality rates surrounding cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and cancer are decreasing these diseases, along with diabetes and obesity, still present a significant health challenge across Scotland and remain highest in commonality within Scotland than the rest of the UK. Place-related factors are strongly related to inequalities in all areas of life, including health care. Factors such as employment, housing, access to services, and travel-to-work

areas may be more significant in perpetuating health inequalities than income deprivation on its own.

What do you think are the significant programmes, actions, strategies, and policies currently in place to help deliver this Goal in Scotland (of any scale) and what have they achieved?

Planning and public health have a long and illustrious shared history. John Snow's discovery of contaminated water sources in 19th century London led to the Sanitation Reforms and the beginnings of a sewer system still in use today. At the same time, early planning efforts were directed at overcoming the health problems associated with slum housing. Health and the built environment are inextricably linked. Investing in quality placemaking is a significant opportunity for cost effective preventative spend on health care services. To deliver healthy places, RTPI Scotland believes that it is important to fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems to address the social determinants of health in each locality.

1. Accessing Health Care Services:

While the health and environmental health communities tend to operate on short-term horizons, the planning community has to deal with long term issues in its role of mediating the use of space and shaping future development. Therefore at a strategic and local level, planners can improve accessibility to health care service through consideration of existing and future health care provision, transport infrastructure, services and premises and the knock-on implications that this has for housing and the health care workforce.

2. Disease Reduction

In relation to disease reduction in Scotland, mortality rates from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease are decreasing whilst diabetes still remains an important concern. Better public transport and active travel infrastructure is a critical means of reducing a range of diseases.. This includes investing in better walking and cycling routes and reducing car speeds to improve road safety. Better cycling infrastructure, for example, often leads to long-term increases in cycling, disease reductions in users and much lower numbers of cyclists killed or seriously injured. Large compact settlement patterns support high-capacity public transport, walking and cycling networks and reduce the relative cost of providing infrastructure and services.

The planning system is central to helping improve air quality and reducing exposure to air pollution. This is recognised in current Scottish Government policy, as set out in the Cleaner Air for Scotland (CAFS) strategy. Policies that promote, for example, high quality building standards, reduce energy use, require the preparation of low emissions strategies and mitigate the use of cars can all improve local air quality. They will also align with other policies aimed at increasing sustainability, notably for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

RTPI Scotland supports the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA) to evaluate the effect of proposed development on health and well-being. In West Lothian Council, the local authority requires HIAs to be carried out and submitted along with major planning applications. The purpose of these HIAs are to identify key impacts both positive and negative that a development may propose on human health and provide sufficient information for them to be taken into account in decision making. In relation to disease reduction this can provide an opportunity

for the local authority to make informed decisions on the impact of development on the local population and by extension the local population's specific health concerns and needs.

3. Areas of Concentrated Deprivation and Suicide

As suicides amongst males living in deprived areas continues to rise it is important to point out the importance of better designed places; increased access to greenspace and improved community engagement on tackling mental health amongst those living in areas of high deprivation. The Marmot review, for example, how depression is seen to be lower in areas with more green space within a one kilometre radius. Amongst children also, natural play environments at school have also been seen to help reduce bullying, improve concentration and promote feelings of self-worth, consequentially reducing the risk of poor mental health in the future. The planning system has a huge potential to positively affect health through the design of neighbourhoods. By ensuring appropriately dense development, streets can begin to feel safe, legible and easy to walk around. Planners can also encourage community participation and cohesion by providing accessible transport and well located services, making it easier for people to pursue healthy lifestyles by promoting active travel and the use of green space. The spatial design of local areas can therefore act to promote social contact, cohesion and participation, especially for vulnerable people. The planning system therefore has huge potential to positively affect health through ensuring that services are joined up that organisations work in partnership within the context of the place principal.

4. Planning and Health for an Ageing population

An ageing population is placing an increasing strain on the healthcare system. Planners have a significant opportunity to improve accessibility of the built environment for an ageing population through their role in the design and maintenance of public spaces and in the decisions and policies they make for an area. Urban form in particular is a critical consideration. Compact, medium density, mixed use and public-transport friendly settlements encourage continued physical activity, economic participation and social interaction into old age. To realise these benefits, planners need to sit centrally in the task of making towns and cities age-friendly, including planning for the provision of more appropriate and specialist housing.

5. Green Infrastructure

In Scotland, around 70% of the population now live in urban areas. The development of the built environment can fragment, isolate and deteriorate natural habitats reducing biodiversity and fostering a growing disconnect with populations and their biosphere. The psychological benefits of nature on humans are numerous, including increased concentration, reduced stress and improved mood. Individuals living in areas of high greenery reported better life satisfaction, exhibiting fewer symptoms of stress, an effect also shown with participants moving into greener areas. Epidemiological studies have found positive correlations between access to greenspace and longevity. The policy and governance structures within the Scottish planning system will have a large influence on how UGI is delivered. This can be achieved through providing an evidence base of current and future green infrastructure needs and opportunities whilst considering accessibility, integrated management and fragmentation prevention.

GOAL 4: Quality Education



What do you think are the significant programmes, actions, strategies, and policies currently in place to help deliver this Goal in Scotland (of any scale) and what have they achieved?

In relation to SDG4, RTPI Scotland would like to draw attention to its own commitment to inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long learning opportunities by highlighting its commitment to skilling up of its members through Continuous Professional Development examinations and annual reviews of accredited planning schools across the country. The RTPI chartered membership is highly regarded and recognised across the world, while the institution itself is the leading professional body for promoting planning development and setting standards for education and professional development. The international recognition of good quality standard services has led to the planning profession being regarded as one of the countries important skills export.

The RTPI also currently accredits course at 4 schools across Scotland: University of Glasgow, Dundee, Strathclyde and Heriot Watt. The professional accreditation of planning schools within these institutions ensure that students are consistently being educated at a high standard which ensures adherence to a globally recognised code of conduct and standard of professional ethics. However, the number of graduates within the discipline has been stagnating with only an estimated 100 planning graduates being produced per year in Scotland. This has further led to a generational gap within planning authorities as only around 9% of staff within planning authorities being under 30 whilst over 35% of staff are over 50.

In order to improve the pipeline of the planning work force, RTPI Scotland is developing a workforce strategy. This March, to assure that there is an adequate supply of qualified planners to meet the ambitions of the country and to have a resilient workforce, a Planning bursary scheme, supported by the Scottish government was launched. This bursary, aimed at 2019 postgraduate enrolments, will therefore help to promote the enrolment of students, in a high quality and professionally tailored education whilst also helping to diversify the future work force by aiding future planners from diverse backgrounds and by extension improving inclusivity, diversity and the quality of the profession.

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy



Please tell us how well you think Scotland is progressing towards achieving this goal and related targets: What is your view of the evidence we have on this Goal, and what does your experience tell us about progress on this Goal?

Although Scotland's performance within the renewable energy sector is strong, low carbon infrastructure delivery and fuel poverty remain major issue across the country. At strategic and local level planning can:

- Identify and approve suitable development
- Integrate and empower stakeholders
- Engage local communities
- Deliver resilient and affordable low carbon networks

Widespread deployment of new energy infrastructure and extensive modification of existing networks will be required. Planning will help deliver the next generation of energy connections, battery storage and smart grid infrastructure. Planners provide the vision to ensure that spatial and energy planning are aligned with strategic investment, employment opportunities and long-term capacity building. This includes the opportunity to upgrade existing facilities, with for example, vast potential in replacing current onshore wind turbine sites with the latest and most efficient turbines. Production of the new energy infrastructure required for renewables can be identified as an opportunity for industrial growth in regions and nations. Creation of vertically integrated supply chains the cost of renewable energy electricity generation, transmission and distribution can be lowered whilst simultaneously stimulating the economic regeneration of areas.

What do you think are the significant programmes, actions, strategies, and policies currently in place to help deliver this Goal in Scotland (of any scale) and what have they achieved?

Unlocking the delivery of low carbon infrastructure is essential for achieving sustainable development and addressing challenges associated with affordable and clean energy. Currently, Scottish Government prepares the Scottish Infrastructure Investment Plan, first published in 2011 and updated in 2016. This provides a strategic approach to infrastructure investment over five year cycles. The 2016 plan sets out long term strategic infrastructure priorities up to 2021 and beyond. RTPI Scotland considers that the current proposals, particularly with regard the delivery body, needs to be more ambitious to be effective. RTPI Scotland therefore welcomes the establishment of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland established by Scottish Government to provide "...independent, informed advice on the nation's vision, ambition and priorities to create a 30-year infrastructure strategy to meet the country's future economic growth and societal needs"

One key innovation to low carbon infrastructure resulting from proactive planning is the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan. The purpose of this innovative plan is to: "set out an integrated planning policy framework to guide marine development, activities and management decisions, whilst ensuring the quality of the marine environment is protected". The plan in conjunction with land use planning, therefore provides an important framework for ensuring that offshore

renewable infrastructure and onshore facilities are provided in a co-ordinated and succinct manner.

In regards to fuel poverty, the main cause of which is the increasing cost of energy. In recent initiatives, Glasgow City Council (GCC) has encouraged stakeholders to consider ways in which they can generate and store their own energy through renewables, district heating and energy storage systems. For example, in the developing the Commonwealth Games Village a self-managed district heating and renewable energy generation was developed in collaboration with a housing association to reduce energy market costs for tenants. This approach includes a £4.3m air source heat pump and solar panel district heating scheme and energy centre in the south side of Glasgow providing 350 tenants with heating and hot water. Accompanying this GCC outlined its commitment to the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) in its 2017-2022 local housing strategy. This strategy stated that all social landlords will be expected to meet this new standard of housing by 2020. Consequentially this goal has led to the creation of the ambitious Govan Water Row housing development masterplan which aims to create 241 new homes built to “Passivhaus” standards.

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities



Please tell us how well you think Scotland is progressing towards achieving this goal and related targets: What is your view of the evidence we have on this Goal, and what does your experience tell us about progress on this Goal?

Whilst Scotland is progressing steadily towards creating cities which are safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable, research by RTPI Scotland shows that local authority planning departments have had their budgets reduced by 40.8% since 2009. This has been accompanied by a 25% reduction in staff since 2009. Cuts of this magnitude to local authority planning departments are reducing services to their regulatory functions. The consequence of a reduced capacity in planning departments is that planners are less able to work with communities and effectively engage stakeholders to achieve a sustainable future. **Without appropriate resourcing for local authority planning departments Scotland will not move towards achieving the wide range of Scottish SDG targets outlined by Scotland's Sustainable Goals Network.**

What do you think are the significant programmes, actions, strategies, and policies currently in place to help deliver this Goal in Scotland (of any scale) and what have they achieved?

Sustainable cities

RTPI Scotland would like to highlight that Scotland's commitment to creating sustainable places is a top priority articulated at the start of both the National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy. In addition, there is a wide range of strategies and policies in Scotland that contribute towards developing more sustainable cities and communities, such as:

- Strategic Development Plans;
- Regional Economic Partnerships;
- City Deals;
- National Transport Strategy;
- National Economic Strategy;
- National Energy Strategy;
- National Marine Plan;
- Land Use Strategy;
- Historic Environment Strategy;
- Fairer Scotland Action Plan;
- National Waste Management Plan;
- Regional Transport Partnerships.

In order to create a socially, economically and environmentally successful country it is essential that these national and regional strategies are well integrated. The impending review of the National Planning Framework (NPF) provides a key opportunity to do this. The NPF sets out a long-term vision for the spatial development of Scotland, which is described as "the spatial expression of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy", focusing on supporting sustainable economic growth and the transition to a low carbon economy. The process by

which the NPF4 will be drafted and the political consensus that will be built around it across different stakeholders will be essential for the achievement of the SDG11 objectives in Scotland.

Sustainable communities

Making communities more informed and more involved in decisions about land use is an objective cutting across several areas of public policy, including community empowerment, urban regeneration, housing and planning. RTPI Scotland urges stakeholders to consider holistic approaches to community engagement in order to allow for an effective, implementation of shared objectives.

The Community Planning agenda in particular has triggered a rethink on how professionals and practitioners engage people in talking about the future of the places they live and work in. The Place Standard Tool, developed in partnership by NHS Scotland, Scottish Government and Architecture and Design Scotland, has provided a means of opening that conversation.

As a result of these policies, there is an ongoing debate among practitioners about how community engagement should be rooted in a comprehensive approach to place-making, rather than happening in response to proposed land use changes. Such an approach would mean implementing planning policies while maintaining forms of public consultations open throughout the process and involving local government agencies, landowners, developers, the public, and other stakeholders in identifying needs and taking responsibility for responding to them in different phases.

There is consensus among Scottish Government and most other planning and stakeholders, including RTPI Scotland, is that decisions on key issues in planning should take place earlier in the process, during the development planning phase instead of the development management phase. This would introduce greater certainty to the system, for public and private sector stakeholders as well as communities. An improved version of community engagement guidance could prove useful in this context, and it could encourage landowners to consult with communities about possible plans for land use change or development before the phase when doing it is a statutory requirement.

Consent for publication

Scotland's SDG network would like to publish responses to this exercise (excluding personal contact information you may have provided) on <https://globalgoals.scot/> upon completion.

Please indicate if you consent to publication of your response in full, in part (please specify) or not at all.

If you have any questions regarding the handling of your data or publication of responses, please contact nationalperformance@gov.scot



I consent to publication of my response IN FULL (excluding contact details)

I consent to publication of my response IN PART (please specify below)

I DO NOT CONSENT to publication of my response

If you would like only part of your response to be published (for example, for commercial confidentiality reasons), please specify which parts you DO and DO NOT wish to be published below.

Thank you

Please send your completed survey, along with any attachments, to nationalperformance@gov.scot

Your response will help to inform our overall approach to delivering the National Outcomes and SDGs in Scotland and our input into the UK Government VNR.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact nationalperformance@gov.scot