

## SUBMISSION FROM CINDY COURTILLIER

I wish to provide comments in response to the following question: 'Whether the policies set out in the NPF2 support the Government's key aims for the development of Scotland to 2030', because I have read evidence which suggests that the Government has failed to undertake a proper consultation of the people of Scotland.

The report called 'A Critique of the National Planning Framework (NPF) Consultation Process' ([www.planningdemocracy.org.uk/NPFreport.pdf](http://www.planningdemocracy.org.uk/NPFreport.pdf)) written by community engagement expert Clare Symonds indeed highlights that although the Government carried out a number of events and a written consultation, it *did not* do the following:

- 1) specifically consult people who will be affected by the developments
- 2) consult people in a way that they could understand both the implications of the NPF and the developments and policies contained in it
- 3) consult people at a time and place suitable to them (for example all of the events were held during working hours)
- 4) reach out to people who are not normally involved in planning issues
- 5) have an effective way of informing the people of Scotland about what was happening

From the evidence provided in this report, I am concerned that the NPF consultation was not really a consultation, but more of an information giving process, which goes against the statement of participation outlined in the new planning Act (2006).

I think that the lack of consultation means that the Government does *not* fulfil one of the **key aims** of the strategy for Scotland's spatial development to 2030, namely 'to help build safer, stronger and healthier communities, by promoting improved opportunities and a better quality of life' (paragraph 43 on page 11 of the final NPF document).

Community participation in the planning system plays a key role in building safer and stronger communities by giving people the opportunity to influence strategic documents and plans such as the NPF. Yet the NPF consultation process has not enabled people to do this.

The Scottish Government promised the people of Scotland a more inclusive planning system through the new approach of the 2006 Planning Act. The Government's own guidance indeed states that 'many people believe that there are barriers to engagement in the planning system, inaccessibility of documents complex procedures, lack of expertise; consultation fatigue; belief that views are not taken into account and distrust of local Government. We need to change all of this. We now have a golden opportunity to create a planning system which Scotland can be proud of- modern, efficient and above all with communities at its heart' (PAN 81 on Community Engagement 2007). However the evidence provided by Clare Symonds's report demonstrates that the Government's approach to consultation on the NPD has been highly ineffective.

I therefore urge you to ensure that the NPF process is held up until people have been consulted properly.

Cindy Courtilier