

SUBMISSION FROM JIM HAMMOND

I write to inform you of my opinion that the NPF2 has failed on two counts: that it has not sufficiently met the criteria for community participation in the planning process; and that environmental protection has been sacrificed to economic development.

If very good participation techniques were to be used to develop the framework further, I believe that a better balance would be struck between environmental and economic development. This would rely however on the clear and unbiased explanation of all relevant factors.

Clare Symonds' report entitled "Critique of the National Planning Framework 2 Consultation Process: An independent evaluation from a community perspective" (<http://www.planningdemocracy.org.uk/NPFreport.pdf>) offers a comprehensive overview of failures to meet the criteria for participation laid out by the Scottish Government. As I am sure you are aware, the benefits of an inclusive planning system are well documented (see work by, for example, David Toke, Patrick Divine-Wright or Maarten Wolsink). Benefits include less community resistance to developments going ahead, greater trust between citizens and developers (in this case the government) and improved community cohesion and empowerment. Good governance through fair and democratic representation is also a stated goal of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, and a national planning framework which falls short of this by failing to specifically consult people who will be affected by the proposed developments would fall short of this goal.

Paragraphs 15 to 18 clearly acknowledge that climate change is a serious threat to lifestyles in Scotland, and will pose a global problem; what is more, it is also acknowledged that green house gasses emitted through transport and energy production must be reduced in order to decrease the serious impacts of climate change. Paragraph 20 states that "there is a strong public consensus in favour of action to reduce congestion and the environmental impacts of car use". It is therefore contradictory in the extreme to plan for airport expansion and a new firth road bridge with a greater capacity. The proposed expansion of power stations is also a matter of serious environmental concern, and I would remind the committee that although highly promising, carbon capture technology is not currently available, and will not be available for the foreseeable future. There must be a balance between prosperity and resource use. But the balance is currently tipped greatly in favour of over-exploitation of the earth's resources. Globally, green house gas emissions are currently greater than outlined in the worst-case scenario by the IPCC (see slide 7 http://www.globalcarbonproject.org/global/pdf/GCP_CarbonBudget_2007.pdf).

This trend is a sign that globally, the balance between environmental protection and economic growth is wrong, is /unsustainable/. As a stated aim of the NPF2 is

"sustainable economic growth" (paragraph 43) it makes no sense to copy others whose growth is unsustainable as described in paragraph 44: "to raise Scotland's GDP growth rate to the UK level by 2011; to match the growth rate of the small independent EU countries by 2017". This is exactly the same logic which has left the north sea and the Atlantic bereft of fish. Because other nations are acting in an unsustainable fashion does not mean that we should.

The Scottish Government currently leads the world in environmental legislation being the first government to dare to count their share of international aviation and shipping in their carbon budget. It would be embarrassing, counter-productive and immoral to undermine these brave steps by formalising a carbon-intensive development plan for Scotland which is not open to further challenge by the public or concerned parties. If such carbon intensive projects are deemed necessary, they should certainly not be enshrined in a national planning framework which has not consulted those who will be effected and will not offer them an avenue of expression once it has been passed. I implore you to review the NPF2, to reduce the environmental impact of developments, look for ways to improve quality of life without increasing economic throughput and most importantly to allow the people to decide how to develop their country through inclusive and accessible participatory planning consultations.

Jim Hammond