



FOR A HAPPIER,
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

Consultation Response

Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods: draft planning guidance

20/7/23

If you have any questions about this response, please contact our policy team:
policy@pathsforall.org.uk

Who We Are

Paths for All is Scotland's walking charity. Established in 1996, we work in partnership with 30 national organisations with a shared vision of a healthier, happier, greener Scotland, where everyone can be active every day. Walking is the easiest and most accessible way to be active, and our work to change the way people move, travel, and enjoy life in Scotland is focused on the following three themes:

- Walking is for everyone.
- Walking is for everywhere.
- Walking is for every day.

Our [strategy](#) sets out our vision for tackling physical inactivity, poor mental health, increased health and transport inequalities and the climate emergency.

Our Response

1 How helpful is part 1 of the guidance in furthering the understanding of local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish context?

very helpful

Please explain your response by adding what else could be helpful:

The Policy Context is helpful - we suggest it should refer to the National Walking Strategy - currently under review.

We see NPF4 as an important opportunity to embed these ideas in plans for the walkable Scotland of the future.

Ten years after the publication of the Christie Commission, the concept of preventative spend that it promoted is very much alive – and the 20-minute neighbourhood can be an embodiment of that idea. Healthy neighbourhoods support healthier lives and can be part of a shift from treating sick people to helping people to stay well.

We support concepts such as 20-minute neighbourhoods so that the places where we live and work are more resilient and sustainable.

Our feeling is that the concept is two-fold. It is about infrastructure - and infrastructure that will be lots of small things across the country rather than big ticket schemes - and also very much about behaviour change. The two come hand in hand.

These are not new concepts. The 20-minute neighbourhood is essentially about walkable neighbourhoods. It is about ensuring that everyday needs are within easy, safe walking distance of home: schools, shops, Post Office, parks, greenspace, paths, good public transport, etc.

We welcome that the Scottish Government is supporting efforts to turn these aspirations into reality.

We agree that 20-minute neighbourhoods will support:

- Climate action
- Decreased health inequalities
- Improved local economy
- Improved liveability/quality of life

We agree that places with high quality housing, local infrastructure, good access to services, employment, education and sustainable travel options can help to break cycles of disadvantage and poverty, promote healthy lifestyles and support physical and mental wellbeing.

We agree that local living can enable people to be more active and provide to good quality greenspace. It can also reduce the reliance on cars - helping to meet targets on reducing car km.

We support the Place Principle as the policy context for place-based working.

We agree that Scotland's diverse urban and rural geographies require flexibility of approach in relation to 20-minute neighbourhoods. It is good that there is a section on how 20-minute neighbourhoods could work in rural and island contexts.

We welcome the inclusion of the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes. The outcomes on Movement – active travel; public transport; traffic and parking and Spaces – streets and spaces; natural spaces; play and recreation are particularly relevant to Paths for All and are supported by our work.

2 How helpful is the framework diagram in encouraging flexible, place-based approaches to support local living?

very helpful

Please explain your response adding what else could be helpful:

We consider this is a helpful way of placing 20-minute neighbourhoods in context.

3 Looking at part 2 of the draft guidance:how helpful are the 'categories' and 'key considerations for local living' that are captured within this part of the document?

very helpful

Please explain your response adding what else could be helpful:

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We fully support the statement on p19 that:

Whatever the context - cities, town, village, rural and island communities - the views and interests of local people must be at the forefront of the decisions made about a place.

It is also important that the parameters for this policy are clearly set and accepted by everyone at the start of the process, i.e., the principles stated on 9 In People, place, and planet.

There is generally strong support for the kind of measures that lead to more liveable places (such as investment in active travel provision).

4 How helpful is the proposed 'structured approach' for use?

very helpful

5 Does part 3 of the guidance clearly communicate the importance of both qualitative and quantitative data in establishing a baseline for a place?

very useful

Please explain your response adding what else could be helpful:

We support the approach set out in part 3.

Community engagement will help to build a sense of ownership of the plan. This should lead to greater acceptance and understanding of what the process is aiming to achieve, and a better chance of long-term implementation.

This will depend on sufficient resources to build community capacity and ensure the delivery of this process. Some communities will be better placed to do this.

In some cases, there will be a need for a degree of enforcement and regulation of behaviour - for example, pavement parking and speeding undermine confidence in changing behaviour to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

In greenspaces, litter and vandalism can be a problem deter people from enjoying these spaces and they need to be monitored and well maintained.

6 How helpful is the 'collaborate, plan, design' section of part 3 in supporting collaborative practices?

very helpful

7 How helpful is the 'implement and review' section of part 3 in assisting the delivery of collaborative approaches to support local living?

very helpful

8 Looking at part 4 of the draft guidance: do the case studies provide a useful and appropriate range of examples of good practice?

Yes

If yes, please tell us about it:

There is a good range of contexts and approaches. A good range of case studies on how local living is being implemented in a variety of contexts across Scotland.

We provided case studies for the Our Place website <https://www.ourplace.scot/case-studies> and would be happy to discuss possible more recent examples from the projects we support.

9 Looking at the impact assessment update report: do you have any views about the initial conclusions of the impact assessment update report that accompany and inform this guidance?

no

10 Additional information: please provide any further comments on the draft guidance document.

Please let us know here:

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happier, greener Scotland, where everyone can be active every day. Walking is the easiest and most accessible way to be active, and our work to change the way people move, travel, and enjoy life in Scotland is focused on the following three themes:

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Our strategy sets out our vision for tackling physical inactivity, poor mental health, increased health and transport inequalities and the climate emergency.

We want to lock in the benefits of walking by providing improved opportunities for people to walk regularly. These include: an investment in walking infrastructure; improved walking and wheeling conditions; prioritisation of walking and wheeling in planning developments as part of 20-minute neighbourhood agenda; support for behaviour change walking programmes; 20mph speed limits in all towns and cities;

enforcement of pavement parking legislation; and investment in walking to school initiatives.

The Scottish Government Programme for Government has a clear commitment on increasing the active travel budget to 10% of the total transport budget by 2024-25 and around 7 in 10 Scots support for the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods (Paths for All Walking and Wheeling Attitudes Survey, 2023). We are therefore hopeful for progress in the coming months and years and delivery based on the priorities in the transport hierarchy.

Local can be strategic.

There is a good case for encouraging small scale, sustainable transport projects across Scotland and there should be recognition that a strategic approach to transport does not need to be about big, flagship investment. It can be about small-scale investment at a local level across the country. We envisage multiple small projects so that the collective scale makes it a major investment. The Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP) philosophy is useful in thinking about this – ‘local projects, meeting local priorities and needs, determined at a local level to deliver national outcomes’. In 2021-22, the £5million SCSP Local Authority fund alone saw 240 individual activities take place within 119 initiatives in 31 local authorities. This resulted in over 185,000 people choosing sustainable transport options for longer journeys, over 95,000 people choosing to walk or cycle for short local journeys, and over 73,000 car miles reduced.

This type of investment will be important in achieving behaviour change towards more sustainable travel and in creating better places for people. This also has the potential benefit of distributing investment in a more equitable way, helping reduce travel and health inequalities.

More small scale, local transport development – especially for active travel and public transport – within a framework that ensures common standards and quality across the country can bring positive impacts on health via air quality and physical activity. Projects might include:

- Walking infrastructure – maintained and widened pavements, controlled crossings, shorter wait times, route finding and signage.
- Bus infrastructure / routes – shelters, hubs and station improvements and walking routes to these nodal points.
- Public realm / walking environment – pedestrianised town centres, green spaces, and green routes.
- Walking maps.
- Community challenges such as Step Count Challenge and Beat the Street



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