

**ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE  
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY**

**Title : Planning Update**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To advise the Authority of development plan progress within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and other planning issues. Matters relating to the progress of the structure plan will be addressed in other reports on this agenda.

**2. Aberdeen City Local Plan**

- 2.1 On 25 June the City Council adopted the Aberdeen Local Plan 2008. This replaces the 1991 Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan. Along with the Structure Plan (North East Scotland Together), the Aberdeen Local Plan now forms the basis for decisions on planning applications and contains policies and proposals for the future development and use of land in the City. The six week period during which a legal challenge could be mounted against the local plan passed without incident.
- 2.2 Consultation has been carried out in relation to the preparation of development frameworks and masterplans, the release of housing sites for the period 2006-10 as well as developer contribution statements for allocated sites. It is likely that these elements will be drawn together in the autumn to support the implementation of the new Local Plan. In addition, monitoring arrangements are being developed to monitor the effects of the local plan on social, economic and environmental issues. Monitoring the effectiveness of policies will help to inform the preparation of the next local development plan.
- 2.3 Although background work has commenced which will build towards the next local development plan, it is still at an early stage. Further details on the progress and programming of the local development plan will emerge through the preparation of a development plan scheme.

**3. Aberdeenshire Local Plan**

- 3.1 A programme of evaluation of the performance of policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan is now coming to an end with a series of stakeholder and Member seminars. These have identified those topics where there are issues with the purpose, or delivery, of the policies themselves. It is intended to report this information to the Infrastructure Services Committee in December, and it will inform the Main Issues Report of a future 'Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan'.
- 3.2 On 4 September Aberdeenshire Council published a request for proposals from the development industry and landowners in order to populate the future local development plan. This information will be collected over the next 8 weeks before professional assessment by the Policy Team. The options for development proposals are also likely to be a key feature of the Main Issues

Report. This engagement has been extended to Community Planning partners to ensure that their land use needs and aspirations are reflected in the emerging plan.

- 3.3 Detailed discussions internally and with the Scottish Government have taken place over the form and content of the local development plan, and the process by which it will be brought forward to deliver the draft structure plan. A draft development plan scheme is in preparation.

#### **4 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Inquiry**

- 4.1 The Public Inquiry into the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route started on 9 September. The Inquiry will be held at the Hilton Aberdeen Treetops hotel and is expected to last between 8 and 10 weeks. A dedicated website has been established to provide access to information relating to the Inquiry ([www.awpr-pli.org/index.asp](http://www.awpr-pli.org/index.asp)). Further updates on progress will be provided at the next meeting.

#### **5 Menie Estate Inquiry.**

- 5.1 The Menie links inquiry began on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June and concluded on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008. No firm indication of a decision date was given but the reporters hoped they would write their reports over the summer with an aspiration to have the report finalised by the Autumn. Further updates will be provided at future meetings.

#### **6 Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative**

- 6.1 The Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative was launched by the Scottish Government on 27 June 2008. Notices of intention to submit a 'bid' were required by 6 August 2008 and full documentation by 17 September 2008. Local authorities, and their partners, were encouraged to propose more sustainable communities as part of the solution to meeting housing requirements in their areas. The initiative is for "large or small scale proposals, whether for new build or for reshaping existing neighbourhoods, in rural or urban areas around the country ... reflecting the character and diversity of Scotland".

- 6.2 The desired outcomes of the initiative are:

- High quality.
- Affordable housing for all sectors of the community.
- Employment opportunities.
- Education.
- Other necessary services.
- Fit well into the landscape.
- Maximise opportunities of the location.
- Fully integrated with public/active transport.

- 6.4 In terms of the Structure Plan and future Strategic Development Plan the proposals must fit in with the spatial strategy. The key issue is to be aware of

the process and stated outcomes and how these sit with the structure plan objectives for sustainable mixed communities and accessibility in particular.

- 6.5 The Scottish Government have confirmed that some submissions have been received in the Aberdeen City and Shire area but at this time no more details are available. Further details will be available once the full submissions have been submitted on 17 September.

## **7. Scottish Planner Magazine**

- 7.1 An article on the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority was published in the August issue of the 'Scottish Planner'. This journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) is circulated to over 2,350 planners, members of the Scottish Parliament and media contacts in Scotland and is available online via the RTPI website. A copy of the relevant sections have been appended to this report (Appendix 1) for information.

## **8. SPP 3: Planning for Homes**

- 8.1 August saw the publication of updated national planning policy (SPP3: Planning for Homes) by the Scottish Government, replacing the previous edition from 2003.
- 8.2 The Scottish Government has indicated that the 2003 edition has not been as effective as hoped in resolving difficulties in bringing forward land allocated for housing in local plans, or tackling continuing problems faced by local authorities and house builders in providing new housing in Scotland.
- 8.3 A draft of SPP3: Planning for Homes was published on 7 January 2008 for a 12 week consultation period; responses were returned by both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.
- 8.4 The SPP "is focussed on the supply and delivery of new housing, which must be of a high-quality design and contribute to the creation of sustainable places. The SPP is underpinned by the requirement to deliver high standards of design and environmental quality in all housing developments as outlined in SPP 1: The Planning System and the Scottish Government's policy statement 'Designing Places' (2001) to meet the needs and demands of communities, the economy and the environment. This SPP will remain relevant throughout the process of the changes in the Planning Act. The SPP will also make the planning for housing process more "efficient, emphasising the primacy of the development plan."
- 8.5 The key objectives of the SPP are to provide policy guidance on:
- identification of housing need and demand on a more consistent and robust basis through joint working between local authorities and a range of partners;
  - the use of the planning system to facilitate the construction of well-designed, good-quality housing in sustainable locations;

- allocation of a generous supply of land to meet identified housing requirements across all tenures, including affordable housing, and related policy objectives;
- mechanisms to help ensure that planned housing is built, including quick and efficient review of development plans to enable maintenance of a 5-year effective land supply; all of which supports
- the creation of high-quality places, which support the development of sustainable communities.

8.6 The Structure Plan and in future the Strategic Development plan will be the primary tools for the delivery of the above objectives, ensuring their implementation and inclusion within the Local Development Plans. The SPP further goes on to state that each authority must draw up a long-term sustainable settlement strategy which should consider the efficient use of land, buildings and infrastructure, accessibility to a range of transport options for all sectors of the community, coordination of housing land provision with improvements in infrastructure and the protection and enhancement of landscapes; natural, built and cultural heritage; biodiversity and the wider environment. Furthermore development plans should address landscaping and open space, mixed communities, rural housing, affordable housing and developer contributions. The Draft Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan considers all these components within its Spatial Strategy and Objectives.

8.7 The content of the revised SPP 3 sits well with the draft structure plan, although a number of aspects will need to be examined in more detail along with the responses to the consultation exercise.

8.8 The revised SPP3 places a much greater emphasis on the effective co-ordination of development plans, local housing strategies and the use of a common information base (Housing Need and Demand Assessments). These challenges are being addressed through the current round of development plans but the guidance can only be fully implemented during the next round. A Housing Need and Demand Assessment is currently underway and early outputs will inform the emerging structure plan.

## **9. Adapting our Ways: Managing Scotland's Climate Risk**

9.1 The Scottish Government intend to consult on "Scotland's Climate Change Adaption Framework" through a two stage process. The first stage of the consultation process aims to raise awareness and gain interest in adapting to climate change. A report on this consultation stage will be produced by early January 2009. Documentation such as the Climate Change Bill will inform the second stage of consultation which is due to begin in early 2009.

9.2 The Climate Change Adaption Framework will "identify strategic principles for priority actions to provide leadership, guidance, and consistency of approach to government and non government decision making". The roles and responsibilities of the public and private sector will be identified in stage two of the consultation process. It is recognised that the success of climate change adaption will be dependant on working in partnership on cross boundary issues.

9.3 At this time there is no response required for the consultation by the Authority other than to acknowledge receipt and highlight an interest in commenting at the second stage of the process.

9.4 Adaptation to climate change is identified as an objective of the draft structure plan and it is proposed to bring a report on this subject to a later meeting of the Authority, possibly coinciding with the stage 2 consultation.

## 10. Staffing

10.1 In August, two new senior planners started with the team. Bruce Strachan moved from the Strategic Development Plan planner post and Laura Robertson moved from Development Management with Aberdeenshire Council. A second planner, Peter Shannon, has recently been appointed and will start work in October. A part-time clerical assistant has also been appointed and is due to start soon. This will take the team up to a full compliment of staff.

## 11 Recommendation

11.1 It is recommended that this report be noted and that a report be prepared for the Authority at a future meeting in relation to Scotland's emerging 'Climate Change Adaptation Framework' and the potential role of the SDPA.

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