

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

Title : Structure Plan Progress Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of progress on the structure plan since the last meeting of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee in June 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee (ACSSPC) on 9 June 2008 a significant amount of work has been undertaken to progress the draft structure plan. In particular, the publication of the plan itself (and associated documents), creation of a new website and arrangements for public consultation have all been successfully undertaken.
- 2.2 Comparison of progress against the development plan scheme allows the Committee to monitor progress on the production of the structure plan and to ensure that commitments to the public and other stakeholders are honoured.

3. Progress since 9 June 2008

Publication of the Draft Structure Plan (and associated documents)

- 3.1 Following Committee approval of the Draft Structure Plan, a graphics process and printing was undertaken to allow publication of the finished document in time for public consultation to begin on 27 June. A total of 3,500 copies of the plan were printed. A press release was distributed and adverts placed in the Press and Journal and 12 weekly Aberdeenshire newspapers.
- 3.2 The draft plan was sent to around 1,000 contacts and placed in all libraries in the area. Around 25 additional copies of the draft plan were sent to each library for members of the public to take away.
- 3.3 Alongside the draft structure plan, three other documents were published for consultation; the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment and Background Paper. These were also made available for consultation at public libraries and the team office in King Street, Aberdeen.

Website

- 3.4 Discussions on creation of a separate website had already taken place with a number of possible web design agencies. This new website was intended to be as informative, accessible and interactive as possible, reflecting e-government aspirations and increasing user expectations.

- 3.5 The website (www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk) went live on the day that the public consultation began; 27 June. Ownership and editing rights for the site are currently being transferred to the team to allow for pages to be updated as and when necessary. The team also has the ability to monitor usage of the site. To date over 70 people have registered to receive updates and a number of consultation responses have been sent via the online form.

Consultation arrangements

- 3.6 In the week prior to formal consultation commencing, copies of the draft structure plan were sent to 970 individuals and organisations, as well as two copies to the 24 active community councils in Aberdeen City and 77 community councils and forums in Aberdeenshire. The members of the Key Stakeholder Reference Group identified in the development plan scheme were also sent copies.
- 3.7 A copy was posted to Members of each Council and all elected Members of the Scottish, Westminster and European Parliaments.
- 3.8 Within Aberdeen City, copies of the draft structure plan (and associated documents) were circulated to every library (including the mobile van) and deposited at 'The Point'. In Aberdeenshire, copies of the same documents were made available at libraries (and mobile services) across the area and were sent to each of the main planning offices.
- 3.9 After consideration of timetabled Community Council meetings, a timetable of public events was drafted and circulated to Area Managers in Aberdeenshire and discussed with the Community Councils Liaison Officer in Aberdeen City. After some suggested changes of dates and venues, bookings were made and the timetable finalised. This timetable was then circulated widely to the majority of people and organisations highlighted above. Once again, adverts notifying the public were published in newspapers across the north-east.
- 3.10 Following the inclusion of an additional date for the North Formartine area, eleven meetings have been held across Aberdeenshire and three in Aberdeen City – 14 in total.
- 3.11 A number of press releases have been issued throughout the consultation period – both on a proactive and reactive basis. This includes a release at the start of the consultation period as well as one as a reminder of the close of consultation.
- 3.12 A reminder letter was sent out one week before the closing date to all individuals and organisations receiving copies of the plan to encourage responses (around 1,000 letters in total).
- 3.13 In addition to the meetings organised, presentations have been given at a number of events. These include meetings of the Aberdeenshire Community Health Partnership, The Aberdeen City Alliance, Aberdeenshire Housing Strategy Group and the Aberdeen Homes Forum. Meetings have also taken place with a number of stakeholders including BT and Transport Scotland.

Although not formally part of the consultation effort, they have served to help reach a wider audience with the plan and to explore issues in more detail.

4. Responses during the consultation period

- 4.1 Formal consultation began on Friday 27 June and ran for 11 weeks until Friday 12 September. As well as responses to the draft structure plan, comments were invited on the associated documents. A consultation on the strategic development plan area boundary took place during this period and is subject to a separate report on the agenda.

Public consultation events

- 4.2 As this period included the entire school summer break, it was decided that no public consultation events should be planned until the week schools returned. Events were scheduled to finish one week before the end of the consultation period; although the addition of a further Shire meeting meant the last event was held on 8 September.
- 4.3 The first event was held in Fraserburgh on 18 August and yielded one of the best turnouts, with 55-60 people attending from a variety of interests. Media coverage had played a part in this and some clear messages were taken away and constructive comments on the presentation received. Attendance at subsequent meetings has varied, ranging from six to 60 people. In general, groups at meetings have comprised the public, community representatives, developers and their agents.
- 4.4 At each event a presentation was given on the draft structure plan, questions were then invited and, depending on numbers, people were asked to form groups to discuss the plan using pre-determined questions to aid responses. The quality of responses has generally been high. At some meetings people took the opportunity to introduce locally important issues such as specific windfarm or retail applications, the Menie Estate proposal or other issues which were not directly the purpose of the event. A note of each meeting is currently being finalised and will be sent to all attendees and be publicly available on the website.

Written responses

- 4.5 Written responses began to be received shortly after the 27 June and continued at a slow but steady pace throughout July and August. The majority of responses received so far have arrived by post, although a substantial amount have been submitted by email or via the online form on our website. A small number of faxed responses were received.
- 4.6 The team is in the process of summarising the representations received. These are being input into a database and proposed responses to each point considered. These recommended responses will be reported to a future meeting of the Authority.

5. Development Plan Scheme

- 5.1 At the last meeting of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee (ACSSPC), Members resolved to agree that (with some minor amendment) the revised development plan scheme (DPS) be published, including electronically and sent to the Scottish Government for information.
- 5.2 The revised DPS is intended to replace the first version published in February 2007. Although not a statutory requirement at this time, production of an up-to-date DPS underlines the two Councils' commitment to the changes taking place towards the modernisation of planning in Scotland.
- 5.3 As reported at the last meeting, one primary aim in revising the DPS was to amend the timetable to reflect the deadlines that the team is now working to. Appendix 1 sets out in more detail how progress has been made against these targets.
- 5.4 However, in summary it can be seen that work on these stages of the draft structure plan preparation continues in accordance with the revised DPS. In particular, progress in getting the draft plan and associated documents approved for consultation, getting these published and putting in place mechanisms for public consultation events and opportunities for submission of individual responses have been achieved in the anticipated timescales.

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Authority note:

- the progress that has been made on the preparation of the draft structure plan since the last meeting;
- the arrangements that were put in place for public consultation and scale and level of responses received to date; and
- that the commitments set out in the revised development plan scheme for these stages of the plan preparation have been met.

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Item : 1

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Appendix 1: Extract from revised development plan scheme (with progress added)

Stage	Part of the plan	Start date	Comments	Progress
Develop the draft plan and strategic environmental assessment to go with it.	Policy and Strategy Committee of Aberdeen City Council (P&S) and Infrastructure Services Committee of Aberdeenshire Council (ISC) consider a provisional draft structure plan.	April to May 2008	When developing the draft structure plan we will take into account the responses to the issues report and the spatial strategy. We will consult P&S and ISC about what should be included in the plan.	This stage has now been completed according to the requirements of the DPS.
	ACSSPC agree on the draft structure plan.	June 2008	ACSSPC will agree a draft plan for publishing and consulting on.	Draft plan was approved on 9 June with consultation beginning on 27 June.
Consult people and organisations about the draft plan, strategic environmental assessment and equalities and human rights impact assessment.	Publish the draft structure plan, strategic environmental assessment and equalities and human rights impact assessment.	June 2008	The documents will be published in hard copy and distributed widely but a new website will improve their availability online.	Draft plan and associated documents were made available from 27 June. Distributed widely through mailings, libraries, council offices and online.
	Over 10 weeks, consult the public on the draft plan.	June to September 2008	We will make consultation documents available from both councils, all libraries, The Point, area offices in Aberdeenshire and on the internet. If you responded to the issues report, we will send you the consultation documents automatically.	This period extended to 11 weeks (until 12/09/08). People who previously got involved have been invited to do so again and new contacts have been added. 14 public events have been held across the SDPA area.