

SDPA Bulletin – December 2009

This is the first SDPA Bulletin and is designed to keep members up-to-date on issues relating to the work of the SDPA where no decisions are currently required.

Future Bulletins will be produced to accompany each meeting of the SDPA as well as being circulated between meetings where appropriate.

1. Legal challenge to the structure plan

- 1.1. The last meeting of the SDPA took place on 18 September 2009. This was one week before the deadline for legal challenge to the Scottish Ministers approval of the structure plan.
- 1.2. That deadline passed without any legal challenge to the plan being lodged with the Court of Session and the validity of the plan can now no longer be questioned through the courts.

2. Plain English

- 2.1. Following the approval by the Scottish Ministers of the structure plan, the Plain English Campaign made the following comment –

"Plain English Campaign are proud of the efforts made by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority in achieving the first, and only, Crystal Mark for a Structure Plan. This improves accessibility and understanding of the document for a diverse public audience, supplemented by the use of plain language in audio files.

This is an excellent example of local government working in partnership with external expertise - considering the needs of local people and doing their best to serve the community with information that can be read, understood and dealt with responsibly, first time round."

- 2.2. This is welcome recognition for the effort over the last three years to produce accessible documents during the preparation of the structure plan.

3. Publication of the Approved Structure Plan

- 3.1. The approved structure plan has now been printed and over 500 complementary copies have been distributed to:
 - Members of both councils;
 - Community Councils;
 - MPs and MSPs;
 - Scottish Government;
 - Key Agencies;

- Libraries;
 - Universities;
 - Members of the Key Stakeholder Reference Group;
 - Officers of both councils; and
 - Neighbouring councils.
- 3.2. In addition, over 1,300 letters have been sent to all those on the consultation database informing them of the publication of the approved plan and how they can obtain copies.
- 3.3. The plan is available on the SDPA website (in PDF, RTF and MP3 formats) and can be viewed at all public libraries in the area. Copies of the plan can also be purchased for £10 each.

4. Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2009

- 4.1. It was reported verbally at the last meeting of the SDPA in September 2009 that a submission made for the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning had been shortlisted in the 'Development Plan' category.
- 4.2. The submission focused on the extent to which the plan embraces the Scottish Government's aspirations for development plans under the 2006 Act. Reference was made to its size, format, focus on outcomes and delivery, accessibility (Plain English and Audio) as well as its formulation using the Key Stakeholder Reference Group.
- 4.3. Presentations and interviews took place on 13 October, with the Director of Planning and Environmental services (Aberdeenshire), Head of Planning and Infrastructure (Aberdeen City) and the Strategic Development Plan Manager representing the SDPA.
- 4.4. Results will not be known until next year, with an awards ceremony taking place on 11 March 2010.

5. National Planning Framework 2

- 5.1. At the last meeting of the SDPA it was reported that the National Planning Framework had been published along with an associated Proposed Action Programme. It was also noted that regional seminars were proposed to unpack the actions to provide a greater level of detail and shared understanding.
- 5.2. However, the Scottish Government has decided to take forward their action programme in a different way to that reported to the last meeting. Instead of a regional seminar, the current proposal is to concentrate on the national developments and have meetings particularly focused around these. With three national developments in this area (East Coast Transmission Upgrade, Aberdeen Airport and Peterhead Power Station), these will be the initial focus of attention.
- 5.3. The SDPA were represented at a meeting organised by Aberdeen Airport to take forward a review of their masterplan, although meetings focused on the

other two national developments are likely to be programmed following an announcement on the results of the Beaulieu-Denny public inquiry.

- 5.4. The challenges experienced by the Scottish Government in taking forward their action programme in many ways mirror those encountered in preparing the action programme for the structure plan.
- 5.5. In addition, on 23 September 2009 an application for judicial review was lodged with the Court of Session against the inclusion of a new coal-fired power station at Hunterston in Ayrshire as a national development in the National Planning Framework.

6. Population Projections (Scotland)

- 6.1. On 21 October 2009 the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) released the results of the latest, 2008-based population projection for Scotland. At this stage the projections are only available at national level, with a release of data for local authorities planned for January 2010.
- 6.2. More detail will be provided for the next meeting of the SDPA in March 2010 and in the structure plan's first monitoring report, while an overview is provided below.
- 6.3. The results of the new set of projections are summarised in Table 1. This shows the total population of Scotland increasing from 5.17 million in 2008 to a Scottish record of 5.27 million in 2013. After this, it is projected to reach 5.54 million by 2033 (a 7 per cent increase on the 2008 level).

Table 1: Projected population of Scotland (2008 based):2008-2033 (000s)

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033
Population (Scotland)	5,169	5,271	5,360	5,442	5,505	5,544

- 6.4. Table 2 compares the 2008-based projection with previous projections. It shows that the population under the latest projection is higher than for earlier projections and that the population of Scotland is projected to continue to rise over the next 25 years.

Table 2: Comparison between projected population for Scotland (000s)

	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033
2008-based Projection	5,271	5,360	5,442	5,505	5,544
2006-based Projection	5,233	5,294	5,344	5,370	5,371
2004-based Projection	5,122	5,128	5,122	5,094	5,040
2003-based Projection	5,020	4,987	4,944	4,878	4,784

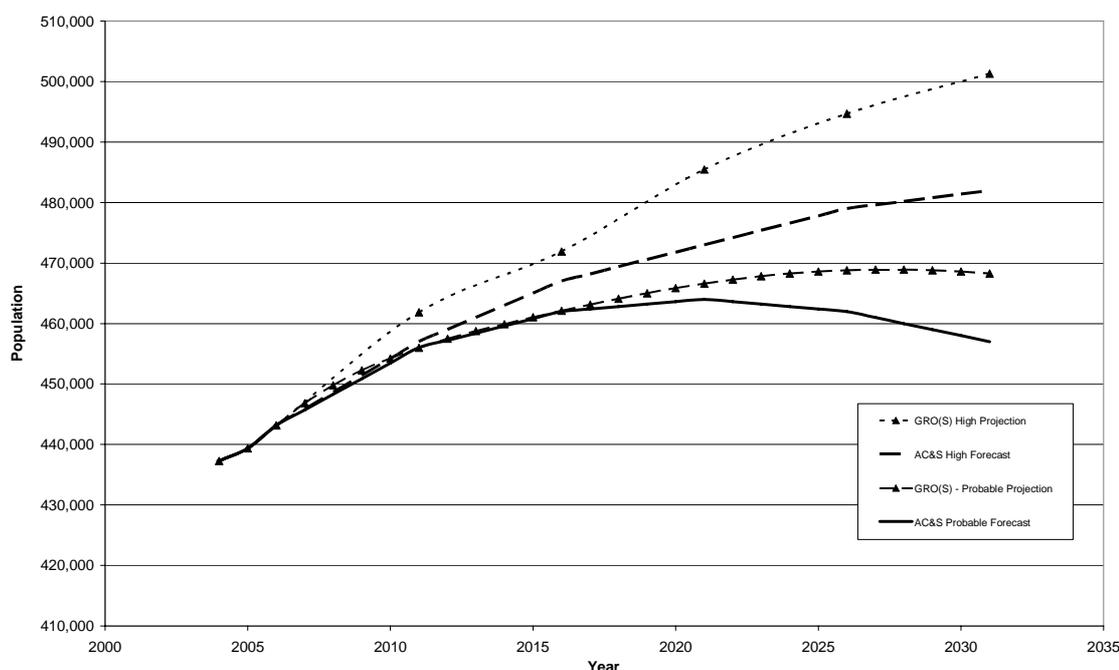
Increase in projection from 2006-based to 2008-based	0.72%	1.23%	1.80%	2.45%	3.12%
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- 6.5. The previous set of projections, published in October 2007, were based on the mid-year population estimates for 2006. The difference between the projections is due in part to the fact that the population in mid-2008 (on which the

projections are based) was around 11,400 higher than the 2006-based projections assumed and to the different assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration.

- 6.6. The Addendum to the Report of Survey for the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan (February 2009) presented the 2006 based GROS projections and locally produced forecasts for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Forecast population change in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire



Source: Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Forecasts 2006-2031
GRO(S) – Population Projections Scotland (2006 based)

- 6.7. Based on the increase in national projections, extrapolating the Scottish changes to Aberdeen City and Shire is likely to bring the 2008 based GROS Principle Projection broadly into line with the 'High Forecast' in the Strategic Forecasts and the targets within the Structure Plan. However, as noted above, sub-national projections will be published in January 2010 and be reported on at that time.

7. Town Centre Regeneration Fund

- 7.1. It was reported to the last meeting of the SDPA that two bids in Aberdeenshire had been successful in the first round of awards from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund.
- 7.2. On 13 November 2009 the results of the second and final round of funding were announced by the Scottish Government, with an additional six successful schemes in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- 7.3. In total, 8 schemes have been awarded funding in Aberdeen City and Shire totalling £2.75m out of the total available of £60m across Scotland (4.6%), as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Town Centre Regeneration Fund – Successful Schemes

Area	Project Sponsor	Project	Award	Round
Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council	Stonehaven Town Hall & environs	£181,500	1
Aberdeenshire	Fraserburgh Development Trust Ltd	Eyesores Remedy Project - Fraserburgh Town Centre	£255,000	1
			£436,500	
Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council	Oldmeldrum Town Centre Improvement	£140,000	2
Aberdeenshire	Aberdeenshire Council	Macduff Property Improvement Zone	£250,000	2
Aberdeenshire	Ashgrove Hotels and Leisure Ltd	Highlander Bunkhouse, Huntly	£200,000	2
Aberdeenshire	Dickson Hall Trust	Laurencekirk Railway Station Environs Development	£467,126	2
Aberdeen City	Aberdeen City Council	Safer Places Improved Spaces (Mastrick, Peterculter, Cults, Rosemount)	£686,031	2
Aberdeen City	Scottish Business in the Community	Retail Rocks! Aberdeen	£572,500	2
			£2,315,657	
TOTAL			£2,752,157	

8. Communications Strategy (ACSEF / Nestrans / ACSSDPA)

- 8.1. A workshop was held at the AECC on 2 November 2009 for members of the SDPA as well as the Nestrans and ACSEF Boards and a number of SDPA members were able to attend. The purpose of the event was to consider how better to communicate the joined-up nature of regional strategies to diverse audiences and move towards a strategic approach to communication.
- 8.2. It was highlighted that the structure plan, regional transport strategy and economic development strategy are well aligned but that this was not widely recognised. It was also suggested that the common vision for the area had not been simply presented or communicated.
- 8.3. It was recognised that the message was complex with diverse audiences. It is also not one ideally suited to getting across through the media who are more interested in issues of immediate controversy rather than directions of longer-term change.
- 8.4. The event provoked much food for thought and the three organisations will be working over the next few months to come forward with proposals to better articulate and communicate the messages.

9. Local Development Plans

- 9.1. Aberdeen City's Main Issues Report was published on 16 October 2009, with a closing date for consultation responses of 11 December 2009. At the time of writing, consultation events throughout the city are ongoing. Following the close of consultation the development plan team will be analysing the responses and moving towards the preparation of the proposed plan and action programme in September 2010.
- 9.2. Aberdeenshire's Main Issues Report consultation closed on 6 June 2009 and over 3,000 representations were received (around 28,000 individual comments). The process of summarising and analysing these is still underway and is likely to lead to slippage in the programme previously published. The revised timetable will be considered by Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee early in the new year.
- 9.3. Both councils are continuing to take forward work with stakeholders as well as jointly working on a number of cross-boundary issues such as education and transport, the SDPA and Nestrans being involved as appropriate.

10. Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

- 10.1. It is currently understood that a decision on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is likely to be made before the end of 2009.