

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY
WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN
WEDNESDAY, 19 JUNE, 2013**

Present:- Councillors R Milne (Chair), P W Bellarby, J B Cox, A Donnelly (Substituting for R Thomson), A Finlayson, R J Merson, G Owen (Substituting for P J Argyle), N J Smith, B A Topping and I Yuill

Officers:- **Strategic Development Planning Authority:** Strategic Development Plan Manager, Planner
Aberdeen City Council: Head of Planning and Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council: Head of Planning and Building Standards, Principal Accountant and Committee Officers (F Brown and C Robertson).

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of interest were intimated.

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors J Corall, P Argyle and R Thomson.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING 22 MARCH, 2013

2. The Authority had before them the Minute of its previous meeting of 22 March, 2013.

The Authority resolved:-

(i) To approve the minute as a correct record.

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2012/2013

3. The SDPA had before them a report by the Treasurer which sought consideration of the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March, 2013 as provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

The Principal Accountant introduced the report and highlighted that there had been a net underspend of £14,000 during the financial year, principally due to a reduced staff complement during that financial period and, if approved this underspend would be returned to the 2 constituent authorities (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire). The report further advised that there had been no movement in the reserves of £104,000, the residue grant remaining unspent from the Scottish Government and at the end of the reporting period the cash flow balance was £157,000. Full notes regarding the accounts were contained within the content of the report.

The Authority resolved:-

(i) To note the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2012/2013 and agree that the Chair would sign the Statement of Accounts to allow them to be issued to the SDPA's external auditor and the Controller of Audit; and

- (ii) To agree the return of £14,000 to the Partner Councils.

NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 3: MAIN ISSUES REPORT AND DRAFT SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

4. There had been circulated a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which sought consideration and agreement for an SDPA response to two Scottish Government consultations on the National Planning Framework 3: Main Issues Report (MIR) and the draft Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).

The Strategic Development Plan Manager introduced the report and advised the SDPA that the closing date for responses for both consultations was 23 July, 2013. The report provided the suggested response by the SDPA in Appendices 2 and 3 and if approved these would be submitted to the Scottish Government as the formal response to each of the consultations.

Within the Main Issues Report (MIR) attention was drawn to the fact that it was proposed that NPF3 would retain the strategy which was contained within NPF2 but it had now evolved to recognise potential national developments which would reflect new circumstances, new challenges and new opportunities faced in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Within the report the Aberdeen to Peterhead area had been identified as an area of co-ordinated action, but it was suggested that more work would be required to ensure that the text of NPF3 would accurately reflect those challenges and opportunities for an area where major changes were expected.

With regards to national developments, it was noted that NPF2 had contained three national developments which were located (or partially located) within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. However, the provisional suite as set out in the MIR contained 14 proposals with six national developments which would be located (or partially located) in the same area. It was recognised that there would be a need for greater clarity within the detailed wording of what would be considered as a national development within the descriptions contained in NPF3.

Sections 3.8 to 3.17 of the report provided specific comments to a number of issues raised in the proposed response and during discussion the SDPA provided comments on those issues, namely:-

- It was noted that a financial package was likely to be sought for the expansion at Nigg Bay, Aberdeen Harbour and while they were happy to see that this had been included within NPF3 as a National Development there were some concerns that if a financial package could not be secured that expansion plans could be constrained;
- the SDPA echoed the concerns raised regarding the Edinburgh – Glasgow rail link being prioritised above overcoming constraints on the existing rail networks in Scotland in particular the East Coast mainline just south of Montrose at Usan;
- the SDPA noted that Peterhead Port and Aberdeen Harbour are complementary operations and decoupling them would be undesirable. It was suggested that further discussions would be required with Peterhead Port Authority to clarify whether they wished to be considered for National Development status. A suggestion was also made that this should include discussions with port customers. It was agreed that discussions with the Port

Authority should take place prior to the submission of the response to the Scottish Government and that the consultation response would be amended to reflect the outcome of these discussions.

The Authority then considered the content of the Scottish Planning Policy response and the following amendments were suggested:-

- (1) Page 31 – Sustainable Economic Growth (Question 1)
 - (i) the word “allow” within the first sentence should be replaced with “enable”
 - (ii) Within the second paragraph it was suggested that if material weight was being attached to economic benefits within SPP then the response should be reworded to reflect that the government should provide clear advice / guidance on how economic benefits should be measured

- (2) Page 39 – Heat and Electricity (Question 18)
 - (i) It was recognised that while reference to these contributions should not form part of SPP, there was local value to voluntary contributions and the suggestion was made that there should be a fixed tariff which would not form part of the decision making for planning applications. It was agreed that an additional sentence should be added to highlight that a robust mechanism is required to deal with these issues.

The Authority resolved:-

- (i) To agree the report and appendices 2 and 3 as the formal response to the relevant Scottish Government consultations, subject to:
 - (a) Any amendment to the NPF response required in light of discussions with Peterhead Port Authority; and
 - (b) the inclusion of the proposed comments on the SPP provided by the Authority during the meeting.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5. There had been circulated a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which asked the SDPA to consider and agree responses to representations on the proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and agree the submission of the plan (and associated documentation) to Scottish Ministers.

The Strategic Development Plan Manager introduced the report and advised the Authority that the period for representations to the proposed SDP was seven weeks which ran from 22 February, 2013 to 12 April, 2013. The Authority were asked to note that 76 individuals/organisations had submitted representations to the plan and of those 247 response forms had been submitted with associated supporting material. The next stage for the preparation of the SDP was submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers for the examination of unresolved representations – the Development Plan Examination. It was noted that as the proposed plan had a Crystal Mark from the Plain English Campaign, any modifications made would also need to be written in plain English. It was advised that it was unlikely that the Examination would be completed before the next scheduled meeting of the SDPA in September 2013, but it was hoped it would be complete for the final meeting of the year in December 2013. The cost of the Examination would be split 50/50 between the Scottish Government and the SDPA and provision had been made for this in the SDPA's annual budget.

During discussion a general concern was raised regarding the legislation surrounding the preparation of the strategic development plan, with the SDPA not being afforded the opportunity make changes in response to representations received. It was suggested that this made it very difficult for communities, who perceived that no-one was listening to their views. It was noted that due to the legislative setup the SDPA were confined with regards to what actions they may take. It was highlighted that the Main Issues Report was the consultation and engagement stage of the process, while the Proposed Plan (the 'settled view' of the SDPA and partner councils) was a period for representations rather than 'consultation'. Any significant amendments to the plan would require a new plan to be prepared and a further period for representations to that plan be provided for. If this were to occur it would significantly delay the submission of the proposed plan to Scottish Ministers.

The Authority resolved to agree:-

- (i) to delegate to officers, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair the final amendments required to Schedule 4's:
- (ii) the submission of the unmodified Proposed Strategic Development plan to Scottish Ministers for Examination along with all the required supporting information;
- (iii) to delegate to officers responses to all information requests from the Reports in support of the plan, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair as appropriate; and
- (iv) that officers monitor the costs of the examination closely and report back to future meetings of the SDPA if they are likely to exceed the budgetary provision.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6. The Authority were advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Strategic Development Planning Authority would be on Wednesday 11 September, 2013 at 2.00pm at the Town House, Aberdeen.

- COUNCILLOR MILNE; Convener