

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

ABERDEEN, 25 March 2015 - minute of meeting of the STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY. Present: Councillor Argyle Chairperson; and Councillor Milne, Vice Chairperson; and Councillors Finlayson, Grant, Thomson and Yuill (Aberdeen City Council); and Councillors Bellarby and Topping (Aberdeenshire Council). Councillor Jean Morrison (Aberdeen City Council) attended as an observer.

Officers: Robert Gray (Head of Planning and Building Standards, Aberdeenshire Council) and Ruth Taylor (Finance, Aberdeenshire Council); Dr Margaret Bochel (Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, ACC), David Jennings (Strategic Development Plan Manager, SDPA) and Iain Robertson (Democratic Services, ACC).

Opening Remarks

1. The Chair welcomed members and invited David Jennings (Strategic Development Plan Manager) to explain the purpose and necessity of the meeting.

Mr Jennings explained that the agenda for the meeting had been stripped back to the statutory minimum in light of a forthcoming meeting of the Standards Commission for Scotland which was to consider an application for a Dispensation from the rules on Interests, which would allow members of Nestrans to consider Nestrans-related matters (such as operation of a Strategic Transport Fund) at the SDPA, or at Council meetings. While not directly an issue for the SDPA, the matter before the Standards Commission could have an impact on consideration of the Strategic Transport Fund (which was due to be the substantive item on the agenda). Aberdeenshire Councillors who had been or were members or substitute members of the Nestrans Board had declared an interest and withdrew from the meeting when the Council considered the Chapleton of Elsick application to modify the S75 agreement.

Mr Jennings added that the automatic dispensation which allowed elected members to consider the same substantive issues at a number of councillor-only committees did not apply because of the presence of non-elected members on the Nestrans Board. Mr Jennings further explained that, as there was a significant crossover of members between Nestrans and the SDPA and based on legal advice, he thought it prudent to postpone consideration of the Strategic Transport Fund until the Standards Commission had met on 30 March and more was known on the implications that their recommendations might have on the development of the supplementary guidance.

Mr Jennings informed members that as a result of this, the meeting had been scaled back to one item which was the approval of the 2015-16 budget that had to be approved by the end of the financial year on 31 March.

SDPA Budget 2015-2016 to 2019-2020

2. The Authority had before it the SDPA budget report for 2015-16 for the Authority to agree and the draft budgets for 2016-17 to 2019-20 for the Authority to

note. The report proposed that the complement of dedicated staff would remain at one Manager and one Senior Planner for the period and explained that there would be an increase in costs compared with the 2014-15 forecast as the Senior Planner's post had remained vacant throughout 2014-15.

The report noted that work done by outside contractors would be in the region of £30,000 for 2015-16 largely due to work on the Housing Market Area Review and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment; the report also added that outside contractor costs were anticipated to drop in subsequent years until 2018-19 when the next Strategic Development Plan examination would commence.

The report also explained that Other Income reflected the release of £104,000 held in reserves since the inception of the Authority and that the outlined budgets for 2016-17 to 2019-20 provided only provisional figures.

Ruth Taylor summarised the report and explained that due to budgetary uncertainties both Councils would contribute £69,000, the same amount as in 2014-15. Ms Taylor also explained that the projected deficit of £17,000 in the financial year 2019-20 would not transpire as the costs would be covered in preceding years by an increase in both Councils contributions and/or through budgetary cuts.

Ms Taylor then answered questions from the Authority which focussed on the fluctuation between the Advertising and Promotions revised 2014-15 budget of £4,000 and the revised 2014-15 forecast of £10,000. Ms Taylor explained that these costs were higher than usual and the increased expenditure was largely due to advertisements in the Press and Journal which were comparatively expensive. Ms Taylor also added that these costs would be contained and offset against other costs in the wider Administration Costs budget.

The report recommended-

that the Authority:

- (a) agree the Budget for 2015-16; and
- (b) note the provisional budgets for 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The Authority resolved:

- (i) to agree the Budget for 2015-16; and
- (ii) to note the provisional budgets for 2016-17 to 2019-20.

3. The Clerk then informed members that a date had to be set for the postponed meeting of the Authority. The Authority agreed to rearrange the meeting for 2pm on 24 April and instructed the Clerk to send out appointments to all members later that day.

- COUNCILLOR PETER ARGYLE; Chairperson.