

**Banff and Buchan Community Council Forum
Station Hotel, Fraserburgh**

**28th September 2006
Issues and Strategic Options
Meeting Note**

In attendance:

David Rosie, Fraserburgh Community Council
Piers Blaxter, Team Leader, Structure Plan

Introduction and Context

Despite the disappointing turnout (telephone calls made over the previous week had confirmed at least six attendees) Mr Blaxter interviewed Mr Rosie with regards to the strategic planning issues that faced the Fraserburgh area. He provided Mr Rosie with a context through reference to some of the slides he had previously prepared.

He highlighted the need to produce a new strategic land use plan, identifying some of the changes that had occurred in the North East since the last Structure Plan was published, and the introduction of the new planning regime that would govern its production.

He emphasised the need for change in the way that the development plan was drawn up, and the focus on early engagement, which the Scottish Executive are promoting. The event that evening was an example of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire's desire to engage with communities at a stage in the process that was meaningful.

He then went on to describe the plan that was to be drawn up, noting that it was to be a plan about strategic direction rather than detailed policies and that its focus would be on the Aberdeen City Region. The need for areas such as Fraserburgh to engage with the process is to ensure that their more prominent neighbour does not disadvantage them.

The subsequent discussion was focused on broad topics, but mainly centred on economic development issues and the role that the land use planning system had in ensuring that sufficient land was available to take advantage of opportunities, should they come along. Prospects for attracting mobile investment to the Fraserburgh area were thought to be low due to the inherent disadvantages of the area in comparison to Aberdeen and Peterhead, partly due to the historic decisions, which resulted in the development of Peterhead as a major port serving the North Sea Oil industry, and the decline of traditional industries.

The stabilisation of the fishing industry, albeit at a lower level than was the case historically, was noted.

Prospects for economic development, therefore, hinged on the ability to promote indigenous enterprise, promotion and maintenance of the quality of life in the area, and facilitating development through ensuring sufficient land was available.

Retailing was seen as one potential area of growth, with Fraserburgh having the potential to enhance its role as a regional shopping town through the

development of additional shopping developments. The role of Tesco in attracting people to the town was highlighted, with concerns expressed over the impact that development of a Tesco store in Peterhead may have on the town. Enhancing retail opportunity in the town centre, and providing car parking to compete with the out of town developments was seen as key.

While housing affordability was acknowledged as less of a problem in Fraserburgh than in some other places, there was still an issue with house prices increasing alarmingly over recent years. Some means of stabilising house price inflation was required. Some parts of Fraserburgh require significant regeneration and a "Masterplan Mark 2" approach could build on the success of the current Fraserburgh North Masterplan.

With reference to transport the need for better links to Aberdeen City were highlighted, with the likelihood of major road improvements, or a rail link, being remote. The benefits of the AWPR were noted, in improving the times taken to traverse Aberdeen City.

As a potential "future scenario" the advantages of Fraserburgh as a port town were highlighted, providing opportunities for transport routes based on coastal shipping to be developed.

Mr Blaxter concluded the meeting by outlining the timetable for the proposed plan. He highlighted the future consultation arrangements and noted that meetings in the main towns in Aberdeenshire to discuss the proposed strategic options were to be held in February and March next year. Both community representatives and business interests would be invited to these meetings, and Mr Blaxter stressed the desirability of communities attending to ensure that the business voice was not the only voice heard.