

ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 9th JUNE, 2008. Present:- Representing Aberdeen City Council:- Councillor Cassie (Chair); and Councillors Cormie, Dean, Jaffrey and Milne.

Representing Aberdeenshire Council:- Councillors Argyle, Cox, Johnston (as substitute for Councillor Storr), Merson, Pratt and Webster.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Committee had before it the Minute of its previous meeting of 23rd May, 2008.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to Article 3 (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Planning Update) to agree to amend the Minute to take out the reference to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral route in the National Planning Framework 2 as it had been agreed that there would be no added benefit to include this major development in this Framework;
- (ii) to further amend Article 3 of the Minute to change the description of the development at the former Donside Paper Mill from “urban development” to “urban village”;
- (iii) to amend Article 5 of the Minute (Draft Structure Plan) to change the description of the consultation process in relation to the proposed new settlement in the draft Structure Plan so that the issue of the new settlement be a question in the consultation process rather than in the draft Structure Plan itself;
- (iv) to further amend Article 5 of the Minute to explain that the reports requested by Aberdeenshire Councillors in relation to Aberdeenshire’s Local Plan would be prepared by Aberdeenshire officers; and
- (v) to otherwise approve the Minute.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Chair agreed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the Appendices to the draft Structure Plan be circulated as a matter of urgency to ensure that the Committee can consider the detail contained therein and approve the content for consultation.

DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

2. With reference to Article 5 of the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 23rd May, 2008, the Committee had before it a report from the Head of Planning and Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council and the Director of Planning and

Environmental Services, Aberdeenshire Council which sought the agreement of the Committee on a draft Structure Plan (and associated documents) for consultation as well as proposed consultation arrangements.

The report explained that in relation to the discussion raised at the meeting of the Committee on 23rd May, 2008, officers had proposed to address the topic of a potential new settlement through a consultation question rather than through a reference in the draft Plan itself.

The report explained that the text of the draft Structure Plan was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and had been approved by the Plain English Campaign for its clarity (as a consequence the draft Plan will be able to display a "Crystal Mark").

The report explained that the draft Structure Plan had accompanying associated consultation documents, these being:- a Strategic Environmental Assessment (Appendix 2 to the report); an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (Appendix 3 to the report); and a background paper detailing a report of a survey which set out factual and statistical information on the North East in relation to its population, households, environment, economy, transport and housing (it was explained that this document was not appended to the report but would be circulated to Members as soon as possible).

The report outlined the proposed consultation arrangements in relation to the draft Structure Plan as follows:-

- if agreed as the basis for consultation, it was proposed to publish the draft Plan and commence consultation as soon as possible (in practice, given the turn-around time for printing the documents, this was likely to be 27th June, 2008).
- in light of the holiday period during July and the first part of August, it was appropriate to extend the consultation period beyond six weeks and as a result, a ten week consultation process was proposed which would give a closing date of 5th September, 2008 for responses.
- in addition to press releases, adverts will be placed in the Press and Journal, one of the Aberdeen free papers and 13 weekly papers throughout Aberdeenshire to announce the publication of the draft Plan and the consultation period.
- copies of the Plan will be widely distributed to community councils and existing contacts as well as being available at libraries, offices of the two Councils and information points.
- a website will be launched to coincide with the start of the consultation period, with existing sites either containing a link or re-directing people to the new site.
- around 14 public meetings will be organised throughout the area from 11th to 29th August, leaving one clear week before the deadline for consultation responses and it was recognised that the first week of this coincides with the last week of the school holidays, however, meetings will be organised in such a way as to give people in these areas an alternative date and location outwith the holiday period.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the draft Structure Plan (Appendix 1 to the report) as the basis for consultation;

- (ii) to approve the associated documents (Appendices 2 and 3) subject to any minor changes being delegated to officers in consultation with the Joint Chairs;
- (iii) to agree to extend the consultation period by a week to 11 weeks;
- (iv) to approve Appendix 4 (background report) subject to any minor changes being delegated to officers in consultation with the Joint Chairs and agreed that it be circulated (once any minor changes have been made) to all Members of the Committee;
- (v) to request that officers re-number certain pages in the Strategic Environmental Assessment appendix;
- (vi) to agree to change the word “currently” to “acknowledged” in the first line of Appendix 1 to the Plan;
- (vii) to agree that details be contained in the Structure Plan summary document in relation to the mitigation measures to be taken with regard to extraction of water from the River Dee, the River Ythan and similarly in relation to air quality in Aberdeen City;
- (viii) to note the statistical research undertaken in relation to the Aberdeen housing market area and noted that this boundary could not be altered by e.g. community groups, however, the statistical research has provided conclusions in relation to a possible amended boundary; and
- (ix) to agree that the statistical research undertaken in relation to the Aberdeen housing market area be submitted to all Members of the Committee.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Chair agreed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the following report on the Revised Development Plan Scheme be considered as a matter of urgency to ensure that the Scheme can be published at the earliest opportunity.

REVISED DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME

3. The Committee had before it a report from the Head of Planning and Infrastructure, Aberdeen City Council and the Director of Planning and Environmental Services, Aberdeenshire Council which provided information on progress in updating the Development Plan Scheme first published in February, 2007 and sought agreement to publish it following minor changes required to secure a “Crystal Mark” from the Plain English Campaign.

The report explained that the first Development Plan Scheme (DPS) was prepared by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee in February, 2007 to coincide with the start of formal work on the new Structure Plan. The report explained that although not a statutory requirement until the new Development Plan regulations come into force in early 2009, production of an up-to-date DPS underlines the two Councils’ commitment to the changes taking place towards the modernisation of planning in Scotland.

The report explained that once published, the DPS will support the publication of the draft Structure Plan and the start of the public consultation period and it will set out where the Councils are in the Plan preparation process and the stages remaining until the Plan is approved by Scottish Ministers.

The report outlined the main changes in relation to the revised DPS, the being:-

- the inclusion of a review of the past year (up to May, 2008);
- updating the risks associated with the programme; and
- updating of the overview of the process including consultations done and the arrangements likely to be put in place once the plan is submitted to Scottish Ministers.

The report explained that it had not been possible to agree the final form of this document with the Plain English Campaign to date, although no problems with this are envisaged, however, in light of the fact that minor changes may be required, delegated powers be used to agree and publish the scheme as required.

A copy of the revised Development Plan Scheme was attached as the Appendix to the report.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) agree the Revised Development Plan Scheme attached as Appendix 1 to the report (subject to any changes required to secure a Crystal Mark from the Plain English Campaign and agree that any such changes be delegated to officers in consultation with the Joint Chairs;
- (b) agree that the Revised Development Plan Scheme be published, including electronically and sent to the Scottish Government for information.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree that the Committee request that the two Councils produce a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (as detailed in the Appendix to the report), as a matter of urgency;
- (ii) to note that officers will update the list of community groups to be consulted in relation to the Development Plan Scheme; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

ACCESS FROM THE SOUTH – ITEM REFERRED FROM NORTH EAST TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP OF 20TH FEBRUARY, 2008

4. The Committee had before it Article 5(3) of the Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership of 20th February, 2008, which had been referred to the Committee for further consideration.

The Minute extract explained that the North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) had been circulated with the draft final report of the Access from the South study. This report reminded Members that this study had followed on from its predecessor as it was felt the earlier work required to be reviewed in light of the revised line of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the new link to Stonehaven and to explore further options in more depth.

Members of NESTRANS proceeded to ask detailed questions about proposals to address difficulties in existing locations, and in view of the significance of some of the schemes mentioned, Members of NESTRANS suggested that further consultation should be undertaken, particularly with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee in order that some of these major works could be incorporated into the new Structure Plan and subsequent Local Development Plans.

The Minute extract explained that NESTRANS had agreed to refer the final report to Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and to the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee for further consideration of the identified potential solutions, for implementation in line with their Local Transport Strategies and for consideration in the context of Development Plans.

The Committee then heard the Director of NESTRANS (Mr. Derick Murray) explain that an Officer Project Board will look at this report (and the report detailed at Article 5 to this Minute), and will prioritise projects; following which the Project Board will cost the projects and create Delivery Plans based on all of the projects detailed and explained that NESTRANS will consider these Delivery Plans in Autumn, 2008.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the Minute extract of NESTRANS of 20th February, 2008 and the update from the Director of NESTRANS.

WESTERN PERIPHERAL ROUTE – LOCKING IN THE BENEFITS – ITEM REFERRED FROM NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP OF 20TH FEBRUARY, 2008

5. The Committee had before it Article 5(4) of the Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership of 20th February, 2008, which had been referred to the Committee.

The Minute extract explained that the North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) had been circulated with a report which had appended to it a study undertaken by Faber Maunsell and SIAS in relation to the linkages between the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the complementary transport measures included in NESTRANS' Modern Transport System.

The Minute extract explained that the study concluded that there were a number of schemes and initiatives which could complement the Western Peripheral Route to ensure that its aims were not only achieved but retained into the longer term, including cycling routes, pedestrian crossing facilities and additional bus lanes or high-occupancy vehicle lanes where appropriate, where capacity could be freed up by re-directing traffic from some routes.

The Minute extract explained that in discussing the report, officers had noted that both Councils needed to cost the projects contained within the study as these may be significant and in this context it was suggested that it should also be referred to the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee.

The Committee then heard the Director of NESTRANS (Mr. Derick Murray) explain that an Officer Project Board will look at this report (and the report detailed at Article 4 to this Minute), and will prioritise projects; following which the Project Board will cost the projects and create Delivery Plans based on all of the projects detailed and explained that NESTRANS will consider these Delivery Plans in Autumn, 2008.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the Minute extract of NESTRANS of 20th February, 2008 and the update from the Director of NESTRANS.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Cox declared an interest in the subject matter of the following item by virtue of being a Board Member of Enterprise North East Trust, but did not consider that the nature of his interest precluded him from participating in the deliberation of the item.

ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – UPDATE ON ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE ECONOMIC FORUM (ACSEF) AND BUSINESS GATEWAY

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Head of Economic and Environmental Sustainability, Aberdeen City Council and the Head of Economic Development, Aberdeenshire Council which provided information on progress on Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ACSEF) and on the progress with the Business Gateway transfer.

The report explained that in November 2007, the Scottish Government launched its new Economic Strategy which provided the overarching strategic direction for Scotland's Public Sector to work collaboratively with the private, academic and third sectors, which was underpinned by 5 strategic objectives:-

- Wealthier and Fairer
- Smarter
- Healthier
- Safer and Stronger
- Greener

The report explained that the principles underlying the Government's Economic Strategy support the strategic direction as expressed in the ACSEF Economic Manifesto, namely its ambition to grow the City and Shire's strong contribution to Scotland's Gross Value Added (GVA) by focussing on the priority industries of energy, food and drink, tourist and life sciences as the drivers of that growth.

The report explained that the aim is to create a partnership to support collaborative working to deliver against the new economic strategy at a national, regional and local level and create a new Regional Economic Development Board building on the best of ACSEF and the Scottish Enterprise Grampian Board.

The report advised the aim of creating this new model is to realise the economic vision for the region and support a step change in delivery. The report explained that four options for moving forward had been considered, these being:-

- do nothing – ie ACSEF and Regional Advisory Board co-exist
- formal partnership further developed supported by jointly funded teams
- joint venture with private sector
- one organisation

The report explained that ACSEF held a summit on 4th June, 2008 at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre where the future direction was discussed.

The report then went onto explain about the transfer of Business Gateway and regeneration/local economic development functions. The report explained that from 1st October, 2007, all Business Gateway contracts within the Scottish Enterprise area have been run by those organisations successful in a national tendering exercise run by Scottish Enterprise. The report advised that the Grampian contract is operated by Enterprise North East Trust who also deliver the contract in the Tayside area.

The report explained that on the 26th of September, 2007, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance announced in Parliament that the responsibility for local Economic Development including the management of the Business Gateway contracts would pass to local authorities from 1st April, 2008, since then, there have been and continues to be discussions with the Scottish Government on the detail of the transfer.

The report explained that in late December, 2007, COSLA requested that each area nominate a lead authority to manage the contracts in areas where the contracts cover more than one Council area and it has been agreed that Aberdeenshire Council act as a lead authority for the Grampian area (a Service Level Agreement will manage performance and quality assurance).

The report explained that one part-time staff member from Scottish Enterprise has been transferred to Aberdeenshire Council and this postholder will deal with the day-to-day management of the contract.

The report explained that the funding of Business Gateway and the transfer of a resource for administration has been agreed and the contract value is £1.3m for 2008/2009 with the staffing and contingency allocation of £98,303 (this covers the core costs of the employee, accommodation and audit requirements).

The report explained that with regard to local regeneration, the financial commitments are for Aberdeen City Centre and for the Contemporary Arts Centre in Aberdeen and there is a legal commitment of £1.055m for Aberdeen City Centre and £2m not legally committed with regard to the contemporary Arts Centre (in addition the Banff Heritage Renaissance Project is legally committed in 2008/09 to the value of £165,000).

The report recommended:-
that the Committee –

- (a) note the developments in the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Development Forum (ie new Regional Economic Development Board being introduced);
- (b) agree that a further report be brought back to the Committee when negotiations are advanced;
- (c) agree that a verbal update of the summit on the 4th of June, 2008 be given at the meeting; and
- (d) agree the developments with regard to the transfer of Scottish Enterprise functions in the Scottish Enterprise Grampian area.

The Committee then heard the Director for Transportation and Infrastructure, Aberdeenshire Council provide a brief update on the summit held on the 4th of June, 2008.

The Committee then asked specific questions in relation to the report which were answered by the officials present.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

- **SCOTT CASSIE, Chair.**