

Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan

Public Consultation Event – Mintlaw

7pm-9pm on 4 September 2008 at Mintlaw Academy

Officers Present:

David Jennings	Strategic Development Plan Manager – Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority
Bruce Strachan	Senior Planner – Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority
Laura Robertson	Senior Planner – Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority

1. Welcome and Outline of the Evening

Mr Jennings welcomed people to the meeting; the 13th of 14 public consultation meetings in relation to the Aberdeen City and Shire Draft Structure Plan. He explained that the meeting was designed to gain the views of the public and that opinions expressed would be noted and used as a base of information when progressing the plan to Finalised Stage. However, it was also emphasised that this was not a substitute for written responses and attendees were encouraged to send these in by 12 September.

Mr Jennings introduced the other officers present in addition to outlining the timetable for the evening and general housekeeping issues.

Mr Jennings informed the members of the public that a note of the meeting would be available from the Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA website at www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk in addition to sending out copies and future updates to those who register their name and address/e-mail details.

2. Background information on preparing the draft plan

Mr Strachan provided information on structure plans and their strategic role in the development plan system. He stated that a structure plan provides a long term, strategic vision for the development of land in an area (in this case until 2030 for the North East of Scotland). He explained that the plan is not just important as a planning document, but also because of the way that proposals within the plan affect where people live and do business, how they move about and how the environment should be protected.

Mr Strachan explained that a new planning Act, which will introduce changes to the current planning system, is currently in the process of being implemented. He outlined a number of reasons for the new legislation which includes speeding up the development plan process; increasing levels of public consultation and ensuring that plans remain up to date to reflect changing circumstances in the area that they serve.

Under the new Planning etc. (Scotland) Act, 2006, structure plans will be replaced with strategic development plans. This new style plan will set a vision and spatial strategy for the City Region that it serves. In accordance with the

Scottish Governments aspiration for “strategic focused, accessible, action-orientated and outcome driven” plans it is thought that strategic development plans will contain fewer detailed policies than is typically found in the current style of structure plan. Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils will be 1 of 4 City Regions which create these new style plans. This draft structure plan reflects the Scottish Governments aspirations for strategic development plans whilst adhering to the current, but soon to be replaced, planning legislation.

Mr Strachan continued to explain that the current adopted structure plan (NEST) which serves the North East of Scotland is outdated, only details how land is to be used until December 2010, no longer meets the aspirations of either council and has constrained Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils Local Plans.

Mr Strachan went on to provide a brief description with regards to previous consultation events which informed the current draft plan. The Councils released a formal notification of intent to begin preparing a new structure plan in February 2007. Prior to this date early internal consultation had taken place involving planning, education, transportation and economic development colleagues. Since February 2007, we have been following an agreed consultation strategy for developing the plan involving four main groups; the general public, community groups; people and organisations in the private sector and people and organisations in the public sector e.g. SNH, NESTRANS and ACSEF.

Mr Strachan explained that a dedicated strategic development plan team was established in March 2008 to take progress the current draft structure plan to adoption and work on the new style strategic development plans following the implementation of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

In April 2008 the provisional draft structure plan was launched for discussion within the Councils at Committee meetings. After consideration of the comments received from each Council, an agreed draft structure plan was published for consultation in June 2008. As part of the implementation of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 the Strategic Development Planning Authority was established by the Scottish Government in June 2008 coinciding with the commencement of the draft structure plan formal consultation process. In addition to the draft plan there are a number of associated documents which are also out for consultation:

- Background Paper
- Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

Mr Strachan explained that a new website has been created for the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority which holds all aforementioned documents for viewing/downloading and where online responses can be submitted. In addition to online responses, comments can be submitted to the Strategic Development Plan Team by fax, e-mail and letter until the consultation period ends at 5pm on Friday 12th September 2008.

3. The Draft Plan

Mr Jennings outlined the aspirations of the Scottish Government for new style strategic development plans to be strategic, focused, accessible, action-orientated and outcome driven. He added that the draft plan had been created to encompass such aspirations whilst adhering to the current, but soon to be replaced, planning legislation. In addition, Mr Jennings highlighted that the plan had received a Crystal Mark from the Plain English Campaign which ensures the document is clear, easy to read and jargon free.

Mr Jennings outlined a North East of Scotland local context with regards to housing demand in terms of the requirement for different house types as well as numbers, a history of population decline which is now rising however the demographics are showing an ageing population. There is a requirement to improve the quality of life and encourage regeneration in some areas. There is also a need to acknowledge that the economy requires growth and diversification whilst recognising the challenges faced by the oil and gas industry. The plan also aims to improve connections within the North East in terms of road/rail and communications whilst also recognising the need to take sustainable development and climate change into the equation.

Mr Jennings explained the 6 main objectives of the draft structure plan:

- Economic Growth – the plan encourages growth and diversification in dominant industries such as oil and gas but also in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- Sustainable Development & Climate Change – we are following the broad targets set by the Scottish Government in terms of reducing emissions, mitigation measures and adaptation in addition to setting targets at a local level with the goal for communities to be sustainable in their age structure/level of facilities and services etc.
- Population Growth – the plan envisages balanced population growth over the entire North East region and in doing so create a vibrant place for people to live.
- Quality of the Environment – the plan aims to ensure that new development maintains and improves the region's important built, natural and cultural assets and in doing so make the environment a selling point for the North East.
- Sustainable Mixed Communities – the plan aims to ensure that new development meets the needs of the community at the present time and in the future by ensuring that communities are accessible to all in terms of housing and services for example.
- Accessibility – the plan aims to reduce the need to travel by improving connectivity and choice of transportation in the North East.

Mr Jennings moved on to explain the draft structure plans spatial strategy which has 3 main strands:

- Strategic Growth Areas – the spatial strategy outlines that the majority of development in the North East is aimed to take place in 3 Strategic Growth Areas. This involves brownfield development in Aberdeen City, road and rail connectivity improvements in the Laurencekirk and Huntly corridors and Scottish Enterprises Energetica initiative in the corridor to

Peterhead. It is envisaged that the 3 areas will require major infrastructure improvements.

- Local Growth & Diversification – ensuring that modest growth is developed in the right places, quantity and is suitable for all whilst providing opportunities for economic growth and diversification. It is envisaged that there will be an emphasis on growth, which respects the areas landscape character and local identity, near or adjacent to existing settlements.
- Regeneration Priority Areas – the plan recognises that some areas in the North East aren't living up to their potential. A key strand of the spatial strategy strives to bring these areas back to meeting their full potential by addressing inequalities, recognising the potential for tourism, encouraging concerted involvement by the public, private and voluntary sector in dealing with issues such as dereliction, improving economic performance and infrastructure improvements.

Mr Jennings concluded by confirming that the constituent councils will work together to progress the plan whilst involving stakeholders, internal members of the Council, Councillors and the communities who will be affected by the changes proposed.

4. Question & Answer Session

1. What happens with this structure plan?

Will need to do a strategic development plan under the new Act and will replace this plan in 3-4 years time. Awaiting information from the Scottish Government on what they want in the future. Expect that it will be a very different type of plan.

2. Heard there are about 10,000 houses for the Inverurie area?

6,500 in the Blackburn – Inverurie corridor. Also 2 alternatives, one lower at 1,000 and one higher at 10,000. Infrastructure at Inverurie means things can happen quicker and will encourage railway use.

3. Only once is the road to Fraserburgh mentioned.

Yes, this is shown in the plan and dualling of the Balmedie to Tipperty section is also mentioned.

4. Tourism isn't mentioned and it brings in a lot of money, around £350m

Tourism is mentioned in a number of places in the plan.

5. What will the plan do to encourage employment?

There is a need for new employment in small towns and large scale provision in the strategic growth areas. Economic diversification is encouraged in the rural areas so that there are as wide a range of local employment opportunities as

possible. The plan seeks sustainable mixed communities.

6. We need to see a dual carriageway to Peterhead.

The Regional Transport Strategy was approved recently, this recognises the problems with capacity and journey times on the Ellon to Peterhead road. The plan could mention a shift to dual carriageway, but up to the RTS first.

7. What about Energetica, does this depend on transport infrastructure?

Energetica was simply a concept when we were producing the plan earlier this year. When the final report is published we will be able to go into more detail. Need to be clear in the structure plan to what extent we can encourage people to the area.

8. Infrastructure should be the main focus, with the AWPR and access to the airport priorities.

The plan assumes that the AWPR will be delivered and the Third Don Crossing and Haudigan improvements should address remaining concerns in terms of giving better access to Aberdeen from the north.

9. Spoke about inequality, do you mean as individuals or as areas?

Both I suppose, but mainly about areas for the structure plan. Improving employment prospects will help this.

10. Does the priority for SGA's mean they will get all road improvements, new housing, schools over other areas?

Not particularly for example if there are 2 schools in a similar state of repair it does not say that the one in the Strategic Growth Area will be done first. The plan tries to focus development to try to achieve something. If development is spread over the whole area with small developments it causes problems and does not provide any solutions ie 100 houses does not equate to a new school.

11. We have concerns that people in Mintlaw will be excluded.

There are 12,000 houses proposed outwith the Strategic Growth Areas. There are also employment and other opportunities. It will be decided at local level how much development goes where.

12. Who is encouraging development in the Regeneration Areas?

The public & private sector will be encouraging development.

13. A member of the public had concerns that some developments at present are not being supported. Three developers have been turned away from Fraserburgh and have had their planning applications refused recently.

Mr Jennings confirmed that he did not know the circumstances of those proposals but suspects that they may have been contrary to the existing development plan framework. Until this plan is approved the council will not be using it. The council are investing money in these area but the schemes you are talking about are probably contrary to the Structure and Local Plan at present.

14. Decisions are not being taken by people who live in Fraserburgh, who will make the decisions on the structure plan?

Mr Jennings confirmed that there is a Banff councillor on the Committee but no one else from this area. However he did also confirm that there are 6 from the City and 6 from the Shire and their remit is to consider the North East as a whole. At the end of the process it will be Scottish Minister who improve the plan.

15. Energetica shows Newburgh and Mintlaw, if this firms up will the corridor become wider?

This plan does not reflect what is proposed elsewhere we need to see how this may affect the Structure Plan.

16. Where will the businesses come from?

The plan encourages new employment land needs to be made available in the right places. There is an economic development strategy and economic development teams that will be considered. Houses won't be built where people don't want to live. It is dependant on many other issues such as economic conditions.

17. There will be Brownfield land developed but there will also be loss of agricultural land can you estimate how much?

Density guidelines in the Strategic Growth Area but not across the board.

18. 50% in Aberdeen but what is the 40% of?

The city will be taking 50% of the total and of that 40% will be on Brownfield land

19. The Rural Housing Market Area adds up to 12,400 units – is this enough over the 22 year period?

Up to 12,400 in all the smaller areas. This is an increase on what has been built over last 10 years, this could however change through a review.

5. **Workshop**

See Separate Note

6. **Conclusion**

Mr Jennings finished the meeting by thanking all for their attendance and restated that the closing date for responses to the draft plan is 12th September. He encouraged all attendees to add their name and address/e-mail to the register if they wished to be notified of the plans progression to adoption and to receive a copy of the minute of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 9:30pm.

Aberdeen City and Shire Draft Structure Plan

Consultation Questions

VISION & AIMS (5 minutes)

1. What do you think of the draft plan's vision on p.5?

More of a dream? Cosmetic exercise – will it happen?

But

Good vision if it can be afforded / delivered.

Ambitious and good for the region as a whole

It's worthy

Generally good 8/10

2. The six aims of the plan are also on p.5. Are these the right aims and do you agree that the first two should be identified as the main aims?

Agree with these as main aims.

Feel transport network is most important.

Yes

In principal, the vision is good – but we wish to have support for rural communities, not just settlements.

Support the aim for use of public transport, IF the public transport suited the area.

Points 5 & 6 would be this groups choices for main aims.

SPATIAL STRATEGY (15 minutes)

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Consultation Questions

3. Most development is proposed in the Strategic Growth Areas as outlined on p.7. Do you feel the following are appropriate?
- a. Location (City and yellow corridors on the key diagram)

Would like to see a better spread of development.
Better transport communications north of Ellon.
You have to start somewhere
Peterhead harbour has great potential for a host of new developments – decommissioning – Scapa Flow container centre.
Huntly – Laurencekirk is appropriate – due to rail link.
The Aberdeen - Peterhead should extend to Fraserburgh.
There is a need to examine airport transport links from Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Ellon in order to encourage tourists north of Aberdeen.
This group feels that it is too limited to narrow corridors of growth which neglects toll of Birness to Fraserburgh route and the main route from Aberdeen through Turriff to Banff. Two small vague arrows are not promoting then growth needed in these areas.
Creating of mini employment hubs in Turriff and Mintlaw.

- b. Scale of housing (table on p.22) and business land (table on p.10)

Would like to see more growth in rural housing market area – current rate 500/600 houses /year x 21 years = 12,000, so no growth.
Would like to see targets for business land in RHMA and regeneration areas.
Supply and demand the market will decline.
Concerns about uncertainty of: Numbers, Employment, Transport, Infrastructure, Hospitals, Surgeries, Dentists, Banks, Post Offices, Community Centres, Village Halls.
Not enough allocation of rural housing. 12,400 over 23 years does not seem enough to sustain our rural communities. It needs to be understood that many people choose to stay in rural areas and not the city.

- c. Phasing for housing (table on p.22, column 2007-2016 etc)

Would like to see more front – loading to kick start development.

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Consultation Questions

Ok

Too intensive in some areas.

Eg. Inverurie – Blackburn & Ellon – Potterton

“comfortable” numbers – Peterhead - Hatton

Seems Fair

d. Approach to Strategic Growth Areas (p.7)

Feel the development corridors are too narrow.

Must have priority for infrastructure investment.

Supportive

Good! Provided the last paragraph of P7 in implemented!

It is felt that the North corridor could be longer and wider covering the route from Toll of Birness to Fraserburgh.

4. The majority of Aberdeenshire is designated for Local Growth and Diversification as outlined on p.8. Do you feel the following are appropriate?

a. Scale of housing proposed (table on p.22)

Not enough to encourage inward investment.

Yes

No Comment

Feel it's inadequate

b. Phasing for housing (table on page 22, column 2007-2016 etc.)

Would like to see more front – end development to kick start regeneration.

Yes

Seems fair given the allocation.

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Consultation Questions

c. Approach to Local Growth Areas (p.8)

First class road – Ellon to Fraserburgh is essential.
Supportive
Should be determined at local plan consultation

5. Parts of Aberdeen City and some of Aberdeenshire's coastal communities have been designated as Regeneration Priority Areas as outlined on p.8. Do you feel the following are appropriate?

a. Locations (hatched areas on key diagram)

North (Banff to P'head) should be more of a priority – more people affected by lack of investment.
Fishing industry needs better communication (roads) with its southern market.
Yes
No as Fraserburgh and Mintlaw should be included in North Corridor.

b. Approach to Regeneration Priority Areas (p.8)

Not enough encouragement to relocate to regeneration areas.
There should be targets set for economic growth in regeneration areas.
Ok
These areas are a priority but need investment and improvement to the road infrastructure first.

OBJECTIVES (15 minutes)

6. Six objectives have been identified and associated issues outlined on p.9-18 - Please consider the objectives we have highlighted below, are these clear and will they help meet the vision?

- Economic growth
- Sustainable development and climate change
- Population growth
- Sustainable mixed communities

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Consultation Questions

- Accessibility
- Quality of the environment

Main focus should be on economic growth.
Followed by Accessibility, Population Growth, Sustainable Mixed Communities, Quality Environment, Sustainable development and climate change.
Yes but how can it be achieved.
Sustainable mixed communities. For employment and residential and leisure.
In rural areas as well as the city. If you consider this the first objective the others should follow.

Considering all six, are there any others you can think of?

Priority investment in infrastructure – roads, schools etc.
Roads and possibly rail to Peterhead.

7. A number of targets are shown for each objective. Using the same objectives as we highlighted for you in Q.6, consider whether any need to be changed or if there are any additional ones that we should set?

See Q.6
Could be far more ambitious in the objectives.
Remove carbon neutral as unrealistic target.
Strongly agree to avoid developments on land at risk of flooding.

PUTTING THE PLAN INTO PRACTICE & PRESENTATION (5 minutes)

8. A wide range of proposals are outlined on p.20 - these are seen as critical in helping the area achieve its potential.
- a) Do you feel any others should be added – why?

Would like to see railway re-opened to Peterhead/Fraserburgh – if it can be afforded.

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Consultation Questions

Improvement at Haudagain Roundabout.
Huge potential for Peterhead Harbour
Third Don crossing prioritised.

b) Do you feel any should be removed – why?

No

9. We have tried to produce a draft structure plan which is both clear and easy to read. Is the plan...

...very clear and easy to read

...quite clear and easy to read

...not very clear and difficult to read

...very difficult to read and understand