

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

Town House, Aberdeen
FRIDAY, 23 JANUARY, 2009

Present:- Councillor Cassie, Chair; Councillor Argyle, Vice-Chair; and Councillors Cormie, Dean, Hunter, Jaffrey, Merson, Milne (in attendance for Article 4 and 5), Pratt, Sullivan and Webster. Councillor Donnelly was in attendance for Articles 1 to 3 as substitute for Councillor Milne.

Apologies:- Councillor Milne (for the start of the meeting)

Officers:- **Strategic Development Planning Team:**
Strategic Development Plan Manager and Senior Planner (B. Strachan)
Aberdeenshire Council: Director of Planning and Environmental Services, and Head of Planning Policy and Environment
Aberdeen City Council: Head of Planning and Infrastructure.

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Authority heard the Chair welcome Councillor Sullivan to his first meeting of the SDPA.

The Authority resolved:-
to concur with the remarks of the Chair.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY OF 3 DECEMBER 2008

2. The Authority had before it a copy of the Minute of Meeting of the Authority of 3rd December 2008.

The Authority asked officers details relating to the holding of separate pre-meetings for members of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, and made reference to the holding of a distinct pre-meeting for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority.

In response, the Clerk to the Authority and the Strategic Development Plan Manager explained that in the past when dealing with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee there had been separate pre-meetings held for members of the two Councils, however with the establishment of the SDPA it was important that the Authority concentrated on what was best for the City Region rather than either Council individually and therefore a distinct pre-meeting had been utilised for each of the 3 meetings of the Authority.

The officers explained that even though this distinct arrangement was in place, this wouldn't stop the two Councils from arranging their own separate pre-meetings for their elected members prior to future meetings of the SDPA if they desired.

The Authority resolved:-

- (i) in relation to the arrangements in place to hold a pre-meeting for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Authority, to request that this arrangement remain in place, however, to note that the two individual Councils may make arrangements for separate pre-meetings for their elected members prior to future meetings of the SDPA; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the Minute.

PLANNING UPDATES

3. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager, which advised the Authority of development plan progress within Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council and other planning issues of interest to the Authority.

The report provided information in relation to:- Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Development Plans; planning applications of strategic importance; secondary legislation relating to the Planning Etcetera (Scotland) Act 2006; infrastructure and developer contributions; details relating to the National Planning Framework 2 Document; details on the Strategic Transport Projects Review announced by a Ministerial Statement to the Scottish Parliament on 10th December, 2008; details on Scottish Planning Policy Documents parts 1 and 2; and details on River Basin Management Planning.

In relation to the details regarding the National Planning Framework 2 Document, the report explained that the proposed framework presented a positive and optimistic view of the City region and provided considerable synergy with the emerging Structure Plan so its publication is to be welcomed. The report explained that the Chair of the SDPA had written to the Clerk to the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee to this effect (a copy of the letter sent formed the Appendix to the report).

The Authority resolved:-

to note the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Authority agreed to consider Appendix 3 to the following report as a matter of urgency in terms of Section 50 (B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 in order for it to consider draft amendments to the draft Structure Plan at the earliest opportunity and in order to fulfil the statutory obligation to submit the Structure Plan for Ministerial approval before the end of February 2009.

STRUCTURE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

4. With reference to Article 3 of the Minute of Meeting of the Authority of 3rd December, 2008, the Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development

Plan Manager, which advised members of progress on the Structure Plan since the last meeting of the Authority in December, 2008.

The report explained that at the last meeting of the Authority, draft responses to around half of the comments received on the draft plan were reported for information. The report explained that Appendices 1 and 2 to the report contained the other half of the comments and draft responses for information and these covered the spatial strategy, putting the plan into practice, schedule 1 (housing allowances) and general comments.

The report explained that appendix 1 contained those comments which it is appropriate to respond to in some way by amending the text of the Plan whilst Appendix 2 contained those comments where no changes to the Plan were necessary, either because the comment was fully supportive of the Plan or for the reason set out in the "draft response".

The report explained that Appendix 3 contained draft amendments to the draft Plan in response to comments received. The report explained that these comments were draft amendments which had yet to be reviewed by the Plain English Campaign and would be subject to change, however, they did give an indication of the changes likely to be proposed to the draft Plan.

The report outlined the key milestones over the next few months in relation to the development of the Structure Plan, which included:-

- the next meeting of the SDPA on 13th February 2009 which will agree responses to comments on the draft Plan and recommend to both Councils the submission of a Finalised Structure Plan to Scottish Ministers;
- the holding of Special Council Meetings by both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils on 19th February 2008 to agree the submission of the Finalised Structure Plan to Scottish Ministers;
- the submission of the Finalised Structure Plan to Scottish Ministers by 27th February, 2009 which will be deposited for objections along with notices being placed in the Edinburgh Gazette and Press and Journal (on two successive weeks) as well as adverts in weekly papers in Aberdeenshire; and
- the closure of the 8 week objection period on 24th April, 2009.

The report explained that following the close of consultation on the Finalised Structure Plan, Scottish Ministers will decide whether an Examination in Public of elements of the Plan is required and also whether to propose modifications to the Plan. The report explained that with the submission on 27th February, 2009, it could be expected that approval of the Structure Plan by Scottish Ministers would take place before the end of 2009.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority note the detail contained in the report, particularly the ways in which it is proposed to deal with the comments contained in Appendices 1 and 2 and the draft proposed changes to the Plan set out at Appendix 3.

The Authority resolved:-

- (i) to note that the two constituent Councils will receive the finalised Structure Plan prior to the next meeting of the SDPA on 13th February, 2009, and that any proposed amendments made by the Authority on that date would be

forwarded to both Councils prior to their Special Council Meetings on 19th February, 2009, thus ensuring that all members of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils (along with the members of the SDPA) would receive the Structure Plan papers at around the same time;

- (ii) to note that the Plain English Campaign had now forwarded views in relation to Appendix 3 and as a result the Appendix would be amended to take account of these views and submitted to the next meeting of the Authority on 13th February, 2009 for consideration;
- (iii) to agree that any minor typographical amendments would be forwarded to the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Manager for action;
- (iv) in relation to page 5 of Appendix 3 to the report (the Vision for the Plan) to agree to the following wording being a policy (in terms of the 1983 Planning Regulations), subject to minor amendment:- – “We will assess development proposals against these aims and balance the importance given to each of them when we come to a decision. We will do this in a confident and courageous way”;
- (v) to note that the Structure Plan would be reviewed in a relatively short time-scale as the Authority would be developing its Strategic Development Plan in due course, and therefore any developing issues prior to the review could be considered for revision;
- (vi) in relation to page 9 to Appendix 3 to the report (third bullet point under “Targets”) to request that officers revisit the wording to provide further clarity on this issue;
- (vii) in relation to page 13 of Appendix 3 to the report to request that officers remove the second bullet point from the “Targets” section of the appendix to the “How to Meet the Targets” section;
- (viii) in relation to the following text on page 16 of Appendix 3 to the report (“Enabling, in exceptional circumstances, planning permission to be granted on a second phased site etc.”) to agree that this paragraph remain in the Structure Plan but be reworded to provide further clarity on the exceptional circumstances required to allow planning permission to be granted on a second phased site and agree that this should be moved to the section “Putting this Plan into practise”;
- (ix) in relation to the following text on page 20 of Appendix 3 to the report (“For new housing to meet the needs of the whole community by providing appropriate levels of affordable housing) (likely to be in the range of twenty to thirty per cent)”) to agree that this section be reworded to make reference to the Housing Need and Demand Assessment;
- (x) in relation to the following text on page 20 of Appendix 3 to the report (“Build on the work completed to date and move towards the completion of a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment etc.”) to request that officers revisit the wording contained in this paragraph specifically the phrase “move towards”;
- (xi) in relation to the following text on page 24 of Appendix 3 to the report (“The replacement of the Inveramsay Rail Bridge to remove transport constraints on the A96”) to agree that the improvements announced through the Strategic Transportation Planning Review be identified under this part of the Plan, which would include improvements to both the A96 and the A90;
- (xii) in relation to the following text on page 25 of Appendix 3 to the report (“The first review of this plan will involve converting it into a strategic development

- plan etc.”) to request that officers revisit the wording in this paragraph to provide further clarity on this issue;
- (xiii) to note in relation to the key diagram (which was circulated for information to the Authority) that officers will make the necessary amendments to the typographical errors contained in the key diagram and submit it to the next meeting of the Authority; and
- (xiv) to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE HOUSING LAND AUDIT 2008

5. With reference to Article 8 of the Minute of Meeting of the Authority of 18th September, 2008, the Authority had before it a report by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Manager which provided a context to and an assessment of the implications of the Housing Land Audit 2008.

The report provided details on:- the results from the Housing Land Audit, 2008; current housing market signals; job losses; new starts and completions; prices and volume; views of the house-building industry; augmentation of the land supply in 2008; Local Plan allocations; brownfield sites; “wind-fall sites” (three planning applications for housing on greenfield sites have been granted planning permission over recent weeks, all associated with golf course and hotel developments in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area); sites programmed between 2012; likely position in the 2009 Audit; and Development Plan progress.

The report explained that an appropriate response to the 2008 Audit needs to take account of market activity, likely changes to the effective supply as well as the response identified in the current Structure Plan.

In summary the report outlined:-

- land will fall out of the audit during the year as a result of the construction of housing, although this is likely to be at a lower level than seen in recent years;
- land will enter the audit in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) at a higher level than falling out of the audit;
- releasing additional land at the current time, even if that were possible, would have little or no impact on completions or the effective supply but would divert resources away from the preparation of the new set of development plans;
- the draft Structure Plan recognises the importance of swift progress with local development plans;
- the draft Structure Plan highlights the need to release sites through the development plan process at the earliest opportunity; and
- both Councils should progress their local development plans so that sites will be available when they are required in the years to come.

The Authority resolved:-

to note the report and that the data on housing starts and completions will be kept under review and will be reported to the Authority on a regular basis.

- **SCOTT CASSIE, Chair**.