

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority Development Plan Scheme 2009/10

Purpose

This development plan scheme sets out the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority's programme for preparing and reviewing its strategic development plan. It is designed to promote transparency, accountability and engagement in the preparation of the plan.

Background

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) was formed in June 2008, as part of the Scottish Government's reform of the planning system. It is one of four in Scotland covering the largest city-regions. Each SDPA is responsible for the preparation and review of a strategic development plan.

The strategic development plan will be a concise, visionary document which will contain a clear spatial strategy for development over 20+ years. It will target key spatial issues and be focused on delivery and outcomes, informing decisions about strategic infrastructure investment. We will build upon and learn the lessons from the recently prepared finalised structure plan which sought to embrace this change.

The strategic development plan area is the area for which the SDPA will prepare its plan (see figure 1). This is made up of the administrative areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, excluding that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park. This area was proposed by the SDPA following a period of consultation in July and August 2008 and was subsequently approved by Scottish Ministers.

When approved, the strategic development plan will replace the structure plan currently with Scottish Ministers (see below).

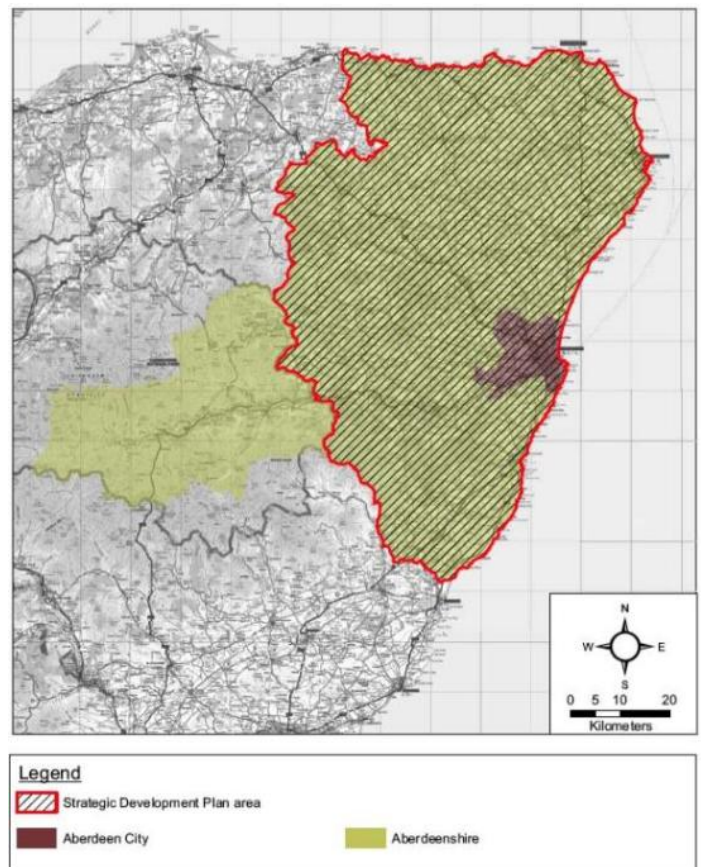
Current Development Plan

As at 1 April 2009, the development plan for the area is made up of the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan (North East Scotland Together) – approved by Scottish Ministers in 2001, the Aberdeenshire Local Plan (2006) and the Aberdeen City Local Plan (2008).

On 27 February 2009 the SDPA submitted a finalised structure plan to Scottish Ministers. This represented a significant milestone for the area and is a plan which seeks to embrace the aspirations behind the modernised planning system. It is hoped that Scottish Ministers will approve the plan by the end of 2009.

Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils have started work on local development plans which will be consistent with the new structure plan.

Figure 1: Strategic Development Plan Area



What is a Development Plan Scheme?

The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 requires development plan schemes to be prepared by all strategic development planning authorities. The scheme sets out the authority's programme for preparing and reviewing its strategic development plan and what is likely to be involved at each stage. It also includes a participation statement, stating when, how and with whom consultation on the plan will take place, as well as the authority's proposals for public involvement in the plan preparation process. The scheme must be regularly monitored and reviewed at least annually.

This is the first statutory development plan scheme prepared by the SDPA, although a non-statutory scheme was produced for the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan in February 2007 (and reviewed in May 2008).

This development plan scheme only covers the strategic part of the development plan. Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils have prepared their own development plan schemes to cover the preparation of local development plans and more information on these can be obtained directly from both councils.

Project Plan

Scottish Government policy is that the development plan scheme should focus on actions that have to be taken to ensure that an up to date development plan is in place as swiftly as possible. Due to the recent submission of a finalised structure plan to Scottish Ministers, the early actions required relate to the preparation of local development plans by the two councils. As a consequence, the project to prepare the first strategic development plan will not begin until 2010 / 2011.

It is important that work on the strategic development plan is co-ordinated with the work of the two councils on their local development plans and this timetable will allow both councils to move forward with the preparation of local development plans to implement the structure plan.

Although not a legal requirement, the 2006 Act would suggest that if the structure plan is approved by the end of 2009, a proposed strategic development plan should be submitted to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2013. However, the proposal outlined below would see a strategic development plan submitted to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2012, and approved by them by the end of 2013.

In light of the current stage in the development plan cycle highlighted above, no detailed project plan has yet been prepared for the strategic development plan. As a consequence, although the legislation requires that months are attached to different stages in the plan preparation process, these are currently very indicative (based on the broad timescales identified in Circular 1/2009). The timescales will be firmed up through a detailed project plan and will be published in the second development plan scheme (April 2010).

There are a number of key stages in the plan preparation process and documents we need to publish. These are highlighted in figure 2 below, along with an indicative timescale. Circular 1/2009 contains a more detailed process diagram which was used as the basis for the summary outlined below.

Figure 2: Indicative Project Plan

Period	Description	Comments
April 2009	Publication of the Development Plan Scheme 2009/10	Due to the current stage in the development plan cycle, the project plan and participation statement are indicative and subject to review.
↓	No work on the strategic development plan will take place during this period.	Work during this period will focus on the process leading to approval and implementation of the finalised structure plan. If an Examination in Public is required by Scottish Ministers, this will cause a delay in the work programme with knock-on impacts on the timetable for the strategic development plan. An action programme will be prepared to ensure that it can be published soon after the plan is approved. Liaison will take place with other SDPAs to learn from their experience of preparing strategic development plans.
April 2010	Publication of the Development Plan Scheme 2010/11	This will be informed by a detailed project plan for the strategic development plan.
↓	Preparation of 'Main Issues Report'.	This stage will include the preparation of supporting documentation such as a Housing Need and Demand Assessment, a Monitoring Statement and the start of the strategic environmental assessment process.
May 2011	Publication of the 'Main Issues Report' and Interim 'Environmental Report'.	This is followed by a 12-week period for consultation and subsequent analysis of the responses.
↓	Preparation of the 'Proposed Plan' and update the 'Environmental Report'.	This will include the preparation of an 'appropriate assessment' under the Habitats Directive, an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment and a Proposed Action Programme.
April 2012	Publication of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.	This includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Proposed Action Programme.
↓	Formal representation period and analysis of responses.	The representation period is likely to be over a period of 12 weeks.
December 2012	Submission of Proposed Strategic Development Plan to Scottish Ministers	This includes submission of the Proposed Action Programme, Report of Conformity with the Participation Statement, and a note of representations and how they have been taken into account.
↓	Examination of Proposed Strategic Development Plan.	The length of the examination will depend on the scale and nature of objections to the plan.
December 2013	Strategic development plan approved by Scottish Ministers	The action programme will be published within three months of the approval of the plan.

Participation Statement

Consultation and engagement will take place throughout the preparation of the strategic development plan and will be integral to the process. We are determined to prepare the strategic development plan in an open and inclusive way. The preparation of the Main Issues Report potentially has the greatest scope for the use of innovative engagement techniques and these will be explored in detail over the next year.

Not all parties will wish or be able to engage with the plan preparation process in the same way. Participation methods need to be tailored to the needs of each group to enable them to participate in an appropriate way. The five main identified groups are:

- Councillors;
- Key Agencies (Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Nestrans and NHS Grampian);
- Public and private sector stakeholders;
- Community Councils; and
- General Public.

Figure 3 below sets out an indication of the time periods over which different elements of engagement will take place. At this time the proposals are not very detailed due to the length of time between now and the start of the process. However, there will be an extensive consultation process highlighted in the second development plan scheme.

Figure 3: Indicative Participation Statement

Period	Aspect of plan	Who?	How?
April 2009 & annually thereafter	Development Plan Scheme		We will publish it on the SDPA website, send an e-alert to those registered on our database and send copies to the Scottish Ministers, Key Agencies, Community Councils and Councillors. Copies will be made available in all libraries.
April 2010 - May 2011	Preparation of the Main Issues Report	Key Agencies, Community Councils, stakeholders, Councillors,	We will organise a public awareness campaign and organise workshops, seminars and meetings as well as contribute to those organised by others. We will seek the active participation of the Key Agencies, as well as Transport Scotland and Historic Scotland.
May 2011 – August 2011	Consultation on the Main Issues Report	All identified groups and individuals	Copies will be sent to identified groups and individuals while press notices and press releases will be used to engage the wider public. We will facilitate the submission of comments by post, fax, email or online.
August 2011 – April 2012	Preparation of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan	Key Agencies, Community Councils, stakeholders, Councillors,	We will engage as necessary on particular issues with identified groups to move from the Main Issues Report to the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.
April 2012 – July 2012	Consultation on Proposed Strategic Development Plan	All identified groups and individuals	Copies will be sent to identified groups and individuals while press notices and press releases will be used to engage the wider public. We will facilitate the submission of comments by post, fax, email or online.
December 2012	Submit to Scottish Ministers	All interested parties.	We will advertise in the press, notify those registered on our database and published all information put on our website.

Keeping you informed

We are determined to make our work as accessible as possible and keep all with an interest up-to-date with progress and opportunities to get involved.

We are in the process of creating a new contacts database and all existing contacts will be asked if they wish to remain on our database. This will be kept up-to-date as far as Key Agencies, Councillors and Community Councils are concerned, although it will be the responsibility of everyone else to inform us of any change of address.

We will notify all interested parties and stakeholders at important stages of the process. However, email offers the opportunity to provide more regular updates and these will be sent to all those who register their email address with us. The website allows interested parties to register their contact details.

Press notices will generally be placed in the Press & Journal newspaper, although weekly papers in both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire will also be used in appropriate circumstances. All press releases will be sent to all local newspapers (as well as certain national media organisations) and placed on our website.

How we will work

Transparency and Accountability

We aim to prepare the strategic development plan in a transparent and accountable way. We will make all relevant information available from our website and progress will be monitored by the SDPA. We will produce a report for submission with the proposed plan which outlines the extent to which we have met the commitments given in the scheme.

Plain English

We will make continuous efforts to make everything we produce as accessible as possible. Not everything will be able to achieve the 'crystal mark' standard but we will monitor our output to ensure that information is effectively communicated at a level appropriate to the intended audience.

Equalities and Human Rights

The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 places a duty on us to perform our functions in a manner which encourages equal opportunities. As part of our commitment to this we will carry out an 'Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment' of all policy documents. In addition, considerable effort will be made to ensure that event venues are accessible to all and that documents are available in alternative formats or languages if required.

Environmental Responsibility

The 2006 Act also places a duty on us to perform our functions with the objective of contributing to sustainable development. Part of this will include taking account of the environmental, social and economic impact of purchasing decisions. Staff will use public transport where possible and we will seek to minimise the environmental impact of our operations.

Monitoring and Review

This development plan scheme will be monitored at regular intervals throughout the year by the SDPA and will be updated at least annually. The second development plan scheme will be published in April 2010.

Getting Involved

If you would like to be involved in the SDP process (or other work of the SDPA) you can register your details on our website or contact us by:

Telephone: 01224 628210

Email: team@aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk

Writing to us at:

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