

Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning

Application Form

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 14 AUGUST 2009

- Please make sure you have read all the notes carefully before you start to fill in the application form.
- This application form can either be completed by hand or electronically – it is available on the Planning homepage at www.scotland.gov.uk/planning.
- An acknowledgement letter will be sent to the person who has completed this form.

1. Title of entry

Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009
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2. Please provide a name and contact details of the lead organisation responsible for this work.

Name	David Jennings
Job title	Strategic Development Plan Manager
Organisation	Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority
Address	Archibald Simpson House, 27 – 29 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5AA
Telephone	01224 628210
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Email	team@aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk

3. If this is a joint application, please list the other partners who had a key role. You should also inform your partners that you are nominating the project for an award.

1	Aberdeen City Council	2	Aberdeenshire Council
3	Key Stakeholder Reference Group	4	
5		6	

4. Tick one nomination category

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Development Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Development on the Ground	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Involvement

Please complete the form on the following pages by providing a brief summary of the piece of work you have entered. You must conclude with a key reason as to why you think this work merits an Award. Only the two A4 pages supplied here can be used and your text must fit within the boxes. The font size should be no less than 12pt.

The judging criteria are set out below. Please tick only the **key** criteria relevant to your entry:

<input type="checkbox"/> Professional knowledge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Community interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/> Customer satisfaction

YOU MUST DESCRIBE, IN YOUR WRITTEN SUBMISSION, HOW THE CRITERIA WHICH YOU HAVE TICKED RELATE TO YOUR PROJECT.

Description of project

This project involved the preparation of a succinct new style of strategic plan. While being prepared under existing legislation, it sought to embrace the change in focus, style and purpose of plans as well as the need to engage with stakeholders, communities and key agencies from the outset as heralded by the 2005 Planning White Paper and the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2008.

Describe the background to the project

The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan – North East Scotland Together (NEST) was approved by Scottish Ministers in December 2001. Local plan progress by the two councils had delayed the expected review and revision of this structure plan. In early 2007 it was concluded by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils that the area could not wait for the proposed new legislation on the preparation of a strategic development plan to come into force and that a new structure plan was required.

What are the aims and objectives of the project?

The Planning White Paper from June 2005 called for a “significant change in the style and purpose of plans at this level.” This was reflected in the innovative development plan scheme published in February 2007 (possibly the first in Scotland) which set the aims and objectives of the project.

The plan set out to:

- include a clear vision and spatial strategy;
- focus on the main areas of change;
- avoid a lot of long policies;
- be written in plain English;
- avoid discriminating against anybody; and
- be transparent and inclusive in its preparation.

In addition, the project was to produce the new plan to a very ambitious timescale, with a detailed project plan set out in the development plan scheme along with an assessment of the risks to the delivery of this timetable.

Over what timescale has the project been developed?

Considerable work and engagement with key stakeholders and Community Council’s took place during 2006. These sessions looked at the type of consultation appropriate for the plan (to inform the consultation strategy) and the issues that the new plan needed to address (to inform the issues report). Work formally commenced on the new structure plan in February 2007 with a draft plan being published for an 11 week public consultation period in June 2008.

A finalised plan was published and submitted to Scottish Ministers on 27 February 2009, with the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan being approved by Scottish Ministers on 14 August 2009.

Explain the process and action taken

Seventy-five consultation events were held during plan preparation. Engagement on the plan was successful with high response levels received to the Issues Report (91), Draft (472) and Finalised Plan (350).

In addition to the statutory requirements for the preparation of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and 'Appropriate Assessment' of the plan, an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment was also prepared.

Obtaining a 'Crystal Mark' from the Plain English Campaign required commitment and time given the complex nature of the report content.

The plan was submitted to Scottish Ministers on 27 February 2009, the day before the new development plan legislation came into force.

Explain the role of the key partners

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils commenced the project with officers involved from both councils. From early 2008 the project was taken forward by the newly formed Strategic Development Planning Authority and its dedicated team. Both councils agreed to the submission of a finalised plan on 19 February 2009, with member engagement throughout the process, including a joint workshop.

A Key Stakeholders Reference Group was established before a decision had been made by the two councils to review the plan. This included SEPA, SNH, Scottish Water, Historic Scotland, Scottish Enterprise and the Regional Transport Partnership as well as other national and local groups. The group met on nine occasions throughout the life of the project and provided an invaluable source of information, support and a sounding-board prior to the consideration of issues by Councillors. It also encouraged buy-in to the plan from national and local groups.

What results were achieved?

The plan has embraced the changes in the planning system. It is concise (30 pages) and visionary, with clear aims and objectives to guide the future of the north east.

The plan is easy to read and received a Plain English Campaign 'Crystal Mark', as did the development plan scheme, issues report, draft and finalised plans. It is the only structure plan in the UK ever to have done so. Its accessibility is enhanced by avoiding the use of acronyms and it is available in an audio description version.

The approval letter from the Scottish Government commended the plan as "a positive response to the Scottish Ministers' desire for succinct development plans". This project will enable key lessons to be learnt for the future preparation of strategic development plans by the four Strategic Development Planning Authorities.

In summary, why does this piece of work merit an Award?

The structure plan breaks new ground in that it was prepared in the style of the new strategic development plan as outlined by Scottish Government thinking in the Planning White Paper (2005) and the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.

In a period of transition the plan has broken the mould of previous structure plans and has been seen by Scottish Ministers as a positive response to the modernisation of development planning – it is short, visionary, strategic, spatial, accessible and focused on change.

Checklist (Please tick) – see Guidance

Part 1 I have completed all five sections of this application.

Part 2 I have supplied at least six images on CD, of the quality specified, to represent the project. (to follow)

Note: Only complete submissions will be accepted.

Signed

Date

Please send your material to:

Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning
Directorate for the Built Environment
Area 2-H
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.
or email sagp2009@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

If you need to discuss any details about the Awards, please contact either:

- Carrie Smith 0131 244 7529 carrie.smith@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- Elaine Rowberry 0131 244 7080 elaine.rowberry@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

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