

**ABERDEEN CITY & SHIRE
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY**

Date: 26 March 2010

Title: Development Plan Scheme 2010/11

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) for a replacement development plan scheme.

2 Background

2.1 Under s20B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, the SDPA are required to prepare a development plan scheme at least annually. The development plan scheme needs to set out the programme for preparing and reviewing the strategic development plan and what is likely to be involved at each stage.

2.2 The current development plan scheme was agreed by the SDPA on 27 March 2009 and submitted to Scottish Ministers on 31 March 2009. A new development plan scheme must therefore be published and submitted to Scottish Ministers by 31 March 2010.

3 Review of 2009/10

3.1 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.

3.2 The focus of the current development plan scheme for 2009/10 was on taking the finalised structure plan through to approval by Scottish Ministers and the actions arising from this in terms of implementation and monitoring. As a consequence, it made clear that work on preparing the first strategic development plan would not commence until 2010/11.

3.3 Work during 2009/10 focussed on securing the approval and implementation of the structure plan. The structure plan was approved by Scottish Ministers on 14 August 2009 and became operational on 17 August 2009. No Examination in Public was required and no appeals were made to the Court of Session during the six week statutory window.

3.4 A non-statutory action programme was prepared for the structure plan and agreed by the SDPA on 4 December 2009. A baseline monitoring report is presented elsewhere on the agenda.

3.5 Considerable work has been done to and update the contacts database, ensuring its compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This was vital as a prerequisite to work starting on the strategic development plan.

4 Good Practice

4.1 The Scottish Government provided general best practice feedback in relation to the first round of development plan schemes. The development plan schemes of all four SDPAs were commended as good – being short, simple, well laid out and clear. The Scottish Government has identified that development plan schemes should :

- be short, simple and clearly laid out;
- provide a brief context;
- present timetables only showing key stages;
- use a table format to combine key information;
- use diagrams and images; and
- print off well from the web.

4.2 The current development plan scheme meets the requirements of legislation and the above criteria.

5 Areas for Amendment

5.1 As highlighted above, the focus of the development plan scheme needs to shift from the latter stages of the structure plan process to the early stages of strategic development plan preparation. Work on preparing the first strategic development plan will begin during the period covered by the new development plan scheme. Therefore the main focus of attention for amendments is the Project Plan section. The main focus of the work during the period April 2010 – May 2011 will be preparing the Main Issues Report and the supporting documents and studies required as part of this process.

5.2 Although minor amendments have been made to expand on the project plan, there have been no changes to the timeline. As a result, the strategic development plan is still proposed to be submitted to Scottish Ministers by the end of 2012 with approval during 2013.

5.3 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 would suggest that a proposed strategic development should be submitted to the Scottish Ministers by August 2013 (given the approval of the structure plan in August 2009). The timetable set out in the development plan scheme will enable this target to be met, even though it doesn't have statutory force for the preparation of the area's first strategic development plan.

5.4 However, it is important to highlight the importance of the relationship between the preparation of the local development plans and the strategic development plan. Revised local development plan schemes have revealed slippage to Aberdeenshire's local development plan timescales. If further slippage were to occur with either timetable there is a risk that the timetable for the strategic development plan may require amendment to accommodate this.

- 5.5 Following best practice advice, the proposed development plan scheme has not been extended beyond its current size and the style and layout has remained consistent, although an additional development plan hierarchy diagram has been inserted to provide further clarity to readers.
- 5.6 Appendix 1 contains the proposed 'Development Plan Scheme 2010/11' setting out a structure and dates for the preparation of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The development plan scheme, once agreed, will be submitted to Scottish Ministers by 31 March 2010.
- 6.2 In line with a commitment to environmental responsibility and resource efficiency, the preferred means of distribution of the development plan scheme will be through the SDPA website. However, there will be a limited circulation of hard copies as follows:
- Scottish Ministers (2 copies);
 - All public libraries in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire;
 - All Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councillors;
 - All Key Agencies (2 copies each);
 - All Community Councils in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire; and
 - On request from the Strategic Development Plan Team.
- 6.3 This meets the statutory requirements for publication set out in s20B of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 6.4 A new development plan scheme will need to be prepared at least annually, with the next scheme required by 31 March 2011.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The costs associated with the publication and distribution of the development plan scheme are likely to be around £500. This will be met from the SDPA's existing resources.

8 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the SDPA:

- a) agree the content of the Development Plan Scheme 2010/11 and its submission to Scottish Ministers by 31 March 2010; and
- b) agree the publication and circulation of the development plan scheme as set out in paragraph 6.2 above.

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