

## SDPA Bulletin – June 2010

The SDPA Bulletin is designed to keep members up-to-date on issues relating to the work of the SDPA where no decisions are currently required.

### 1. Minute of Agreement Update

- 1.1. The last meeting of the SDPA agreed a report which proposed a small number of amendments to the Minute of Agreement between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council governing the functioning of the SDPA.
- 1.2. Reports were subsequently considered by both Aberdeen City Council (Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee) on 20 April 2010 and Aberdeenshire Council (Infrastructure Services Committee) on 13 May 2010. Both councils accepted the recommendations of the SDPA.
- 1.3. The amended Minute of Agreement replaced the original agreement with effect from 14 May 2010.

### 2. Household Projections

- 2.1. On 20 May 2010 the General Register Office for Scotland published 2008-based household projections for council areas which are available from their website (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/household-projections-statistics/hproj-08-based/index.html>). These are based on the population projections published earlier this year and reported in the March edition of the SDPA Bulletin.
- 2.2. Figure 1 below shows the number of households rising in both council areas over the period to 2033 and by almost 55,000 for Aberdeen City and Shire (+27%). This represents a rate of growth in excess of the Scottish average (+21%).

Figure 1: Household Projections (2008 – 2033)

	2008	2033	Change	
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	102,900	122,070	19,170	19%
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	101,520	137,170	35,650	35%
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	204,420	259,240	54,820	27%
<b>Scotland</b>	2,331,250	2,812,52	481,270	21%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2010)

- 2.3. Household projections for the four strategic development plan areas will be published later in the year (possibly August). This will remove that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park from the figures above.

- 2.4. In addition to the 'probable' projection presented above, two alternative projections have been prepared by the General Register Office for Scotland based on the variant population projections. These are set out in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Variant household projections for Aberdeen City and Shire**

	<b>Low Projection</b>	<b>Probable Projection</b>	<b>High Projection</b>
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	244,160	259,240	270,640
<b>Change (2008 – 2033)</b>	+ 39,740	+ 54,820	+ 66,220
	+ 19%	+ 27%	+ 32%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2010)

- 2.5. It can be seen that the projections for the period to 2033 range from almost 40,000 new households (+19%) to over 66,000 new households (+32%).
- 2.6. The implication of these projections will be examined further in the preparation of the main issues report for the strategic development plan. However, the current structure plan has a housing requirement of 56,304 over a 24 year period and allowances in excess of this which will enable higher growth levels if demand exists.

### 3. Population Estimates

- 3.1. The March 2010 Bulletin reported the publication of the 2008-based population projection for Scotland. On 28 April 2010 the General Register Office for Scotland published mid-2009 population estimates for council areas (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/population-estimates/mid-year/mid-2009-pop-est/index.html>).
- 3.2. The results of the new estimates are summarised in Figure 3. This shows the total population of Aberdeen City and Shire increasing from 451,860 in 2008 to 457,320 in 2009, representing an increase of almost 5,500 (1.2%). The population of Scotland increased by 0.5% over this period.

**Figure 3: Estimated population of Aberdeen City and Shire (2009)**

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>Change</b>	
<b>Aberdeen City</b>	210,400	213,810	+ 3,410	+ 1.6%
<b>Aberdeenshire</b>	241,460	243,510	+ 2,050	+ 0.8%
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	451,860	457,320	+ 5,460	+ 1.2%
<b>Scotland</b>	5,168,500	5,194,000	+ 25,500	+ 0.5%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland (2010)

- 3.3. The Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City and Shire figures above include that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park. This equates to around 3,200 people. However, the official estimate for the strategic development plan area will not be available until September 2010 with the publication of small area population estimates.
- 3.4. The population growth in Aberdeen City was the highest of any council area in Scotland, while the growth in Aberdeenshire also exceeded the national average.

- 3.5. The population growth to mid-2009 is part of a longer-term trend and is in line with the population growth strategy in the structure plan.
- 3.6. The General Register Office for Scotland plan to publish population projections for SDP areas on 10 June 2010.

#### **4. Local Development Plans**

- 8.1 Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils expect to publish proposed local development plans for consultation before the next meeting of the SDPA in September 2010.
- 8.2 Aberdeen City Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee considered responses to the Main Issues Report on 31 May 2010, while a meeting of Full Council is expected to consider the proposed local development plan at its meeting of 18 August 2010. It is anticipated that a 12 week consultation period will commence in September and close before the end of the year.
- 8.3 Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee is due to meet on 17 June 2010 to consider its proposed local development plan, followed by a meeting of Full Council on 24 June 2010. It is anticipated that a 12 week consultation period will commence in July and end in October 2010.
- 8.4 It is understood that these will be the first two proposed local development plans to be published in Scotland under the new legislation - a significant achievement for both councils.

#### **5. Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route**

- 5.1. It is understood that a legal challenge has been lodged at the Court of Session against the decision of the Scottish Ministers to approve the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.
- 5.2. At the current time, however, the nature and potential implications of this challenge are unknown.
- 5.3. A delay to the construction of this critical infrastructure project would be regrettable and not in the interests of the people and businesses of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. A close interest in the progress of the case will be taken and the potential implications will be assessed as more information becomes available. The implications of any delay would need to be managed so as to minimise the negative impacts on future development, the transport network and economy of the area.

#### **6. Third Don Crossing**

- 6.1. In addition to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, another key infrastructure project is the third Don crossing. The last edition of the Bulletin highlighted that a detailed planning application had been submitted on 29 January 2010. Subsequent to this, on 22 April 2010 an Environmental Report was submitted to accompany the application.

- 6.2. The application and supporting material can be found on the Aberdeen City Council website (<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/PlanningDetail.asp?ref=100135>).
- 6.3. The application is still at the early stage but a decision can be expected later this year unless the application is called in by Scottish Minister.

## **7. Housing Need and Demand Assessment**

- 7.1. In March 2008, the Scottish Government published guidance on the preparation of 'Housing Need and Demand Assessments'. These were designed to provide a common evidence base to inform both development plans and local housing strategies.
- 7.2. Officers from both planning and housing services from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils, along with the SDP Team have been working on the preparation of a 'Housing Need and Demand Assessment'. This has been informed by a wider partnership which took in housing associations, Homes for Scotland, mortgage lenders, the Aberdeen Solicitors Property Centre and other community planning partners.
- 7.3. A draft report was submitted to the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis on 30 April 2010 for review. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the Housing Need and Demand Assessment provides a 'robust and credible' evidence base for future plans and strategies.
- 7.4. The results of the appraisal by the Scottish Government is due in early June and may highlight recommendations for amendments required to the current assessment and/or suggestions for future assessments. Where assessments are identified as 'robust and credible' by the Scottish Government, their approach should not normally be subject further discussion at development plan examination, with the focus at the examination being on the way the results have informed the development plan itself.
- 7.5. An updated assessment will be prepared alongside the strategic development plan in early 2011, informing both the strategic development plan Main Issues Report and local housing strategies to be prepared by both councils.
- 7.6. The results of the assessment will be reported to a future meeting of the SDPA.

## **8. Communications Strategy (ACSEF / Nestrans / ACSSDPA)**

- 8.1. A workshop was held in late 2009 for members of the SDPA as well as the Nestrans and ACSEF Boards. The purpose of the event was to consider how better to communicate the joined-up nature of regional strategies to diverse audiences and move towards a strategic approach to communication.
- 8.2. Building on that workshop, a tender document was prepared based on a two-stage process to achieve the strategic approach to communication sought.
- 8.3. A contractor has now been appointed to prepare the first stage which will focus on the preparation of written, graphic and audio-visual material to present an

integrated picture of the future of Aberdeen City and Shire, highlighting the complementary nature of the structure plan, regional transport strategy and economic development strategy.

- 8.4. Stage 2 is foreseen as developing the material prepared in stage 1 and making use of it to communicate to partners, local and national politicians, potential investors and the general public.

## 9. Greenhouse Gas Assessment

- 9.1. The Scottish Government has recently commissioned research into the potential for quantitative greenhouse gas assessment to inform spatial planning policy. The research is being carried out by consultants on behalf of the Scottish Government and the Strategic Development Plan Manager has been asked to sit on the Steering Group.
- 9.2. It is hoped that this tool could assist planning authorities in informing the spatial planning choices made from the National Planning Framework through to strategic and local development plans and masterplans. The research should be completed by the end of 2010 and may inform work on the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report.
- 9.3. Footprinting was carried out on the spatial options for the current structure plan in 2007/08 to consider their relative impact in terms of carbon emissions, although the current research seeks to take the level of analysis several stages further and make it applicable to a range of spatial planning contexts.

## 10. SDPA Website Statistics (January 2010– March 2010)

- 10.1. The second of the rolling quarterly summaries of web statistics is set out in Figure 4 below. The ability to monitor website usage in this way follows the implementation of the recommendations of a review of the site in 2009, with data available from October 2009 onwards.

Figure 4: Website Summary Statistics

	Q3 (2009/10)	Q4 (2009/10)
<b>Unique Visitors</b>	1,066	1,138
<b>New Visitors</b>	1,066 (100%)	1,016 (58%)
<b>Unique Visits</b>	1,717	1,766
<b>Average number of visits</b>	1.61	1.55
<b>Average time spent at site</b>	3:24 minutes	2:39 minutes
<b>Total Page Views</b>	7,681	6,952
<b>Unique page views</b>	4,786	4,686
<b>Average pages viewed</b>	4.5	3.9
<b>Access - Direct / Referral / Search</b>	34 / 30 / 39	26 / 28 / 46
<b>Document Downloads</b>	N/a	N/a

- 10.2. In total 1,066 unique people visited the SDPA site during the first three months of 2010, with most users being classed as 'new' (had not visited the site since the beginning of October 2009).

- 10.3. 1,766 visits to the SDPA website were recorded during the period, with each spending an average of 2:39 minutes and visiting an average of 3.9 pages. 26% of visitors accessed the site using previous bookmarks (or directly typing in the address), 46% used a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing, BT-yahoo) and 28% were referred via a link from another websites.

## **11. Strategic Development Plan Transport Assessment**

- 11.1. Early discussions have taken place with Nestrans in relation to the transport assessment to be prepared alongside the Strategic Development Plan. These discussions have been very positive and it is anticipated that this will be taken forward as a joint piece of work with the involvement of Transport Scotland.
- 11.2. Further refinement of this proposal will be carried out in the coming months and will be reported to the September meeting of the SDPA.

## **12. Union Terrace Gardens.**

- 12.1. The March 2010 edition of the Bulletin noted the proposals being put forward for union terrace gardens in Aberdeen.
- 12.2. A meeting of Aberdeen City Council on 19 May 2010 considered a report entitled "Aberdeen City Centre – Developing a vision for the future" (<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Published/C00000122/M00000371/A100005499/AberdeenCityCentre.pdf>). The report considered the future development of the City Centre, presenting a draft development framework (one of the actions identified in the structure plan). In this context, consideration was given to the proposals being put forward for Union Terrace Gardens.
- 12.3. Aberdeen City Council agreed to support the progression of the Union Terrace Gardens proposals to the next stage (an international design competition) subject to a number of conditions.

## **13. Draft Plan for Offshore Wind Energy**

- 13.1. On 19 May 2010 the Scottish Government published a consultation on a 'Draft plan for offshore wind energy in Scottish Territorial water'. The consultation period runs until 16 August 2010. The draft plan is accompanied by an environmental report and both are available online on the Scottish Government website (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/05/14155137/0>).
- 13.2. The purpose of the Plan is to consider the potential of Scottish Territorial Waters (up to the 12 nautical mile limit) to accommodate offshore wind energy developments from a national perspective, making proposals for the short (2010 – 2020), medium (2020 – 2030) and long term (beyond 2030).
- 13.3. A sieve-mapping exercise was undertaken to identify those areas with the most potential capacity and the least sensitivities. These factors are set out in Figure 5 below.

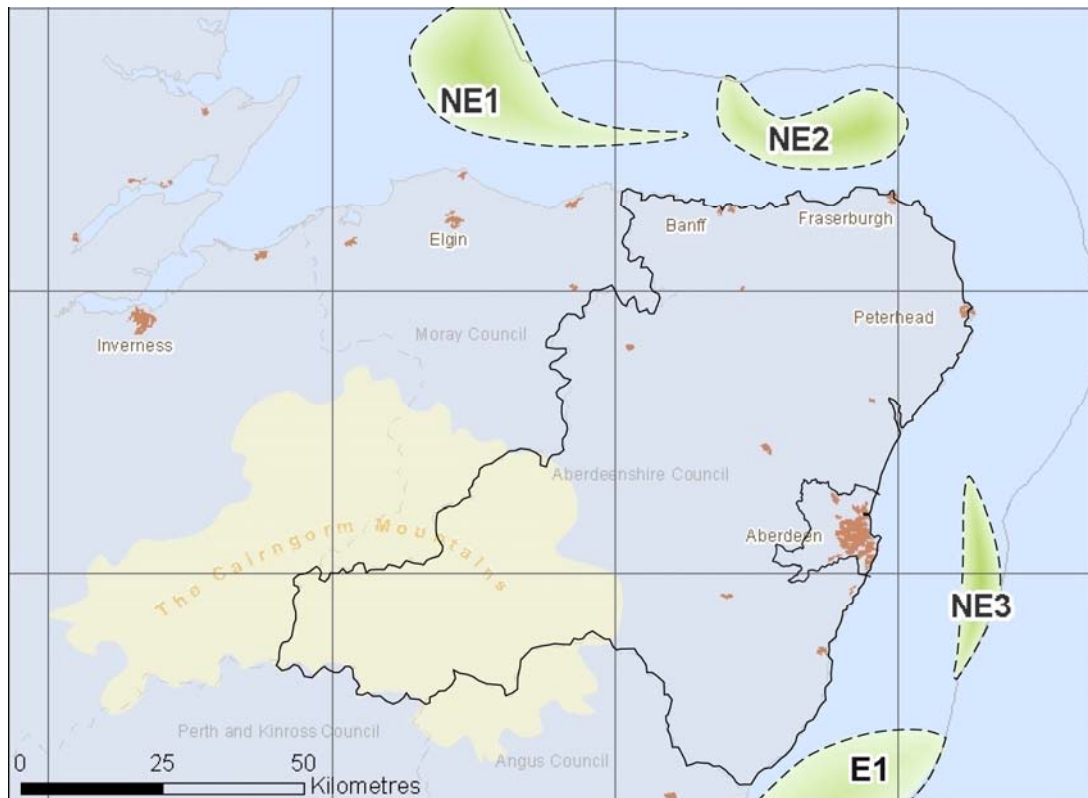
**Figure 5: Offshore Wind Energy Exclusions, Sensitivities and Issues**

<b>Exclusions</b>	<b>Potential environmental Sensitivities</b>	<b>Potential Technical Issues</b>
MoD Munitions Dumps	World Heritage Sites	Shipping Density
Surface Infrastructure	Wrecks	Sub-sea pipelines and infrastructure
Safety Zones Offshore Wells	Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) and SACs	Helicopter Platform
Round 1 and 3 Wind farms	Proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPA) and SPAs	Helicopter Routes - North Sea
Electricity and Gas Interconnectors	National Scenic Areas (NSA) Seascapes	Radar Interference Zones
Aquaculture Pending and Current Leases	Bird Densities	UK Civil Licensed Aerodrome Buffer (24 km) MoD Airfields (24 km Buffer)
Petroleum Industry's Active Pipelines	Cetacean Density	MoD Practice and Exercise Areas (PEXA)
Cable on the UK's continental shelf	Seabird Colony Reserves	Anchorage Areas
Wind Farm Cables	Basking Shark Locations	Navigation Aids
Wave Lease for Portnahaven	Seal Observation Locations (various species)	Cables Not In Use
European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC) Wave and Tidal Power Leases	RSPB reserves	Disused Disposal Sites
Aggregate Dredging Licences	Important Bird Areas	Royal Yachting Association Cruising Routes 2008
MoD Danger Areas	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	Royal Yachting Association Racing Areas 2008
International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Routes	National Nature Reserves (NNR)	Royal Yachting Association Sailing Areas 2008
	Ramsar Sites	Commercial Fishing Value
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
	Fish spawning and nursery grounds	

13.4. Four medium-term opportunities have been identified off the coast of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire (see Figure 6 below). Sites NE1 (partially) and NE2 lie off the North Aberdeenshire coast, while NE3 lies off the east coast of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire extending just north of Aberdeen to south of Stonehaven. Site E1 extends from just north of Inverbervie to the border with England. Site NE3 appears to be unrelated to the proposals being taken forward by the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG) for a 'European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre' off the coast between Aberdeen and Blackdog (north of Aberdeen) as it is further offshore.

13.5. The detail of the consultation documents will be examined further over the coming weeks to determine whether a response from the SDPA is appropriate at this stage.

**Figure 6: Medium-term opportunities off Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire**



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## **14. Cairngorms National Park – Proposed extension**

14.1. A consultation period closed on 31 May 2010 on the proposed extension of the Cairngorms National Park into Perth and Kinross. The Scottish Government's boundary proposal does not impact on any part of Aberdeenshire and, as a consequence, does not impact on the Strategic Development Plan area.

14.2. The area of the proposed extension does fall within the TAYplan SDP area as currently determined. However, it is understood that there are no current plans to seek a re-determination of the SDP area to exclude the area (an option allowed for under legislation).

## **15. Inquiry into the relationship between transport and land use planning**

15.1. The Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee have started an investigation into the relationship between transport and land use planning. The formal remit of the inquiry is to consider:

- the nature and extent of the current relationship between transport and land use planning policies;
- the scope for further integration of these policies; and
- the benefits that further integration might deliver in terms of sustainable economic growth and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



- 15.2. Officers from Nestrans and the SDPA submitted a joint response to the call for evidence, which required submissions by 7 May 2010. A copy of the submitted response is attached at Appendix 1 and highlights the joint working in the North East.
- 15.3. Subsequent to this, Dr Margaret Bochel, in her capacity as chair of Heads of Planning Scotland, gave evidence to the Committee on 1 June 2010.
- 15.4. It is anticipated that the parliamentary committee will produce its report by the end of June 2010.

## **16. Water supply and demand**

- 16.1. Action 14 from the structure plan action programme requires that the SDPA work with Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Water to find out how much water can be taken from the River Dee.
- 16.2. Over recent months, to implement this action, officers have been discussing water resource issues with Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, along with officers from the two local development plan teams. This has culminated in the preparation of a position paper which sets out the collective understanding of issues relating to the supply of water to new development (at a strategic level) and water abstraction from the River Dee in particular.
- 16.3. Officers will continue to work with partners to explore the issues raised in the position paper to ensure that future reviews of Scottish Water's abstraction licenses and its investment programme reflect the importance attached to the delivery of future development in the area. In particular, it will focus on the role of water efficiency measures in facilitating development in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

# Appendix 1: Nestrans / SDPA Submission to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee

## WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM THE NORTH EAST SCOTLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP AND THE ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

### **Introduction**

This paper is submitted jointly by Nestrans and the Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA. It is submitted in response to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee's call for written submissions for their inquiry into the relationship between transport and land use planning policies.

This is a joint paper to highlight how transport and land use policies have been developed across the North East in an integrated way. This integration extends beyond transport and land use to include the regional "Economic Manifesto" developed by Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF). All three organisations, in tandem with our constituent Local Authorities, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, are seeking to work to a common agenda for the area and working out the implications of that vision in each area of responsibility.

The paper sets out the context within which the development of the regional and local spatial planning documentation has taken place within the North East of Scotland. It will highlight where things have worked well and why, where efforts are being made to improve matters and where lessons can be learned.

### **Background**

Nestrans, the SDPA, ACSEF, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils each recognise the importance of the Scottish Government's central purpose of sustainable economic growth and what that means in the context of the North East of Scotland. There is a shared understanding of the challenges faced by the area as well as the opportunities available to plan for a more prosperous and sustainable future. Each body has a distinctive role to play in delivering this vision but there are close linkages between them and opportunities to work together as appropriate.

Our region is working to combat the relatively universal problem of the proportion of the population over the age of 65 doubling in the next few years but has the additional challenge of responding to the charted decline of hydrocarbon production from the North Sea.

In assessing these challenges the region has worked closely with our business community to firstly agree the problems to be addressed and also the most effective solutions to pursue to address these issues.

ACSEF has engaged with over 1600 businesses to determine their view of what the North East needs to do. The conclusion of this engagement was that there was a common agreement between the public and private sectors that:

- a) the region currently is a very significant positive contributor to both the Scottish and UK economies and
- b) the region wishes to maintain its economic success, wishes to continue to prosper, and maintain its position as a net contributor to the Scottish and UK economies rather than accept a slow economic decline putting the region into a position of requiring net support from these economies.

### **Implementation**

The implementation of this shared vision for the future of the area has many facets but is facilitated by a number of key factors:

- Members on the Boards

There are a number of Council Members who sit on the various regional boards – 1 who sits on all 3 and 5 who sit on 2 of the 3 Boards. This enables joined-up thinking by councillors as well as officers.

- Senior Members involvement

Each of the three regional Boards benefits from Senior Councillor involvement, ensuring that there are strong links with the constituent councils.

- Regional Transport model

The North East benefits from having a multi-modal transport model for the area – ASAM. Nestrans has invested in this model to keep it up to date and useful for development of both the Structure Plan and the Local Development Plans.

An essential component of this model is of course the land use data that is common to that used in developing the Structure and Local Development Plans.

- Future Infrastructure Requirements Groups

Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils have Future Infrastructure Requirements Groups. Both Nestrans and the SDPA, along with Transport Scotland and local transportation teams, are involved in these. These groups have considered the outcomes from the modelling described above and have engaged successfully with the development industry over the key issues thereby reducing uncertainty.

- National – Regional – Local

The close co-operation described above has created a clear shared vision for development across the North East. This clarity and single voice is reflected in the very close alignment between regional and local documents. It has also been extremely useful in discussions with national government resulting in very clear linkages between the local and regional documents and the National Planning Framework 2 and the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

Policies have been aligned through national, regional and local documents focussing efforts into delivery of the agreed strategies and plans.

### **Issues that have been helpful**

- Alignment of boundaries

The alignment of boundaries is extremely useful when bringing the bodies together for discussion. The only difference in boundaries is the exclusion of that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park from the strategic development plan area.

- Co-location

Nestrans, the SDPA and ACSEF are all located in one building in close proximity to each other. This has led to the building of strong levels of interaction and co-operation and follows the logic of the Scottish Government's Circular 3/2008 which highlighted the potential benefits of co-location for regional bodies.

- Shared budgets

Because the bodies are aligned geographically and work very closely together, having created a shared single vision for the future of our region, sharing budgets to the common aim is easier and simpler. This is particularly useful in further binding the bodies to the common goal but in also speeding up delivery.

ACSEF budgets, for example, have been used in the transport sector in developing studies related to the economic impact of the airport and the possibilities for the development of new routes.

Nestrans and the SDPA have contributed financially to the testing of options for the Local Development Plans, using the regional model discussed above, and for cumulative impact testing looking at the impact of both Local Development Plans when taken together and across boundaries.

- Links to Business organisations

The public sector's recognition of the vital role of the private sector in the development of our region has led to the development of closer ties between the public sector Boards and business groups such as Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

Evidence of these links can be seen through a co-ordinated approach to the economic regulation of Airports and the Competition Commissions investigation of BAA. This resulted in a coherent approach from the North East to the commission's proposals and amendments.

Both Nestrans and ACSEF have private sector representation at board level, with the ACSEF Board being 15 strong and 13 of these Board Members being from the private sector. Although the Strategic Development Planning Authority does not have this, the structure plan was developed with a Key Stakeholder Reference Group which had representation from the business community through Scottish Enterprise, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce as well as ACSEF itself.

Letters of support for the structure plan from Nestrans, ACSEF and the wider business community (including the chamber of commerce) evidenced the fruitful nature of the joint working.

### **Things to do better and lessons learned**

- Time period for each plan / strategy

The timeframe for the National Planning Framework 2, the Strategic Transport Projects Review and the Structure Plan is around the period to 2030. However the timeframe for the Regional Transport Strategy is around the early 2020's. There has been some criticism that this is confusing and should be harmonised so that all regional strategies cover a similar timeframe.

- Formal linkages between planning processes

There are linkages set out in Scottish Planning Policy between the preparation of Strategic Development Plans and Local Housing Strategies (for example). However, these same linkages are not as clear with the Regional Transport Strategy. However, the need for this alignment is clear and both Nestrans and the SDPA will be seeking a joined-up approach to this over the next few years.

- Increased community involvement

The North East has been very good at engaging with the business community to assess the current situation and to attempt to look forward and assess what the future may hold. We have been less successful at engaging with communities in planning at a strategic level. Although all the planning documents have been through a thorough and rigorous public consultation exercise this has resulted, in particular, in a lack of appreciation of the complementary nature of the strategies and plans.

This has been recognised by all the area's regional bodies and local Councils. A communications strategy is currently in development to paint the big picture of what the future could be like at the city region scale and what the current Plans are meant to achieve to provide the conditions for the desired future – emphasising the integration.

In the longer term, a challenge for those implementing and developing future Plans will be to increase community involvement in and understanding of what is being done and planned in their area. The main challenge will be to make this interesting enough to attract the attention of the people who would like to contribute to the process.

- The role of the Community Planning Partnerships

The Community Planning Partnerships are still in their relative infancy. This is particularly true of the Single Outcome Agreements (SOA), with each Community Planning Partnership having only signed one agreement to date.

The SOAs though have the potential to be a driver for much of the development and implementation of an area's strategic planning.

This document brings together the main service providers in the area around a community focus. In its very early infancy it has been very good at providing clear linkages between the services that are provided and the desired outcomes. In many cases this has helped highlight areas where joint working is already underway or could be started/ enhanced.

Should the SOAs work to their full potential they could act as the tone setting overarching documents from which other planning documents (across all services not just transport and land use) flow. This would require the Community Planning Partnerships to become more focussed on the outcomes to be agreed rather than the targets and indicators to use, many of which are repeated in subsidiary documents in any case.

Service providers should then have the duty to show how they are meeting the SOA outcomes including the indicators and targets.

There will be challenges to be overcome in reconciling any potentially differing views between the two SOAs.

## **Conclusion**

The close working relationships between the regional bodies and the Local Authorities has ensured that there is a strong linkage between transport and land use planning in the North East, providing a suite of planning documents that are fully integrated, not only across the North East but also nationally. This paper has also highlighted how economic development has been seen and incorporated into the planning process as an equally important and fully integrated theme for the future of the North East. This integration of transport, land use and economic development has been a key factor in our planning process.

It is the intention that the transport requirements of the Local Development Plans are fully addressed and the regional model and Future Infrastructure Requirement Groups are intended to achieve this. This should lead to the transport requirements of individual planning applications being considered within the context of the Local Development Plan requirements.

Throughout the development of all the planning documentation, achieving the necessary sustainable economic growth whilst addressing the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has been a central tenet of consideration of options. An example of this was the carbon footprinting exercise carried out of the spatial planning options for the Structure Plan.