

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY

Town House, Aberdeen
FRIDAY, 10th SEPTEMBER, 2010

Present:- Councillor Argyle, Chairperson; and Councillors Boulton, G Clark (as substitute for Councillor Pratt), Cormie, Cox, Hunter, McCaig, Merson, and Webster.

Apologies:- Councillors, Dean, Pratt and Sullivan.

Officers:- **Strategic Development Planning Team:** David Jennings and Bruce Strachan.

Aberdeen City Council: Development Plan Team Leader, Planner and Committee Manager.

Aberdeenshire Council: Policy and Environment Manager.

Also in Attendance: Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Authority had before it the minute of its meeting of 18th June, 2010.

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the minute.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT TRANSPORT APPRAISAL GUIDANCE (DPMTAG) CONSULTATION

2. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which informed members about the publication of new draft transport appraisal guidance by Transport Scotland entitled "Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG).

The report advised that Transport Scotland had produced DPMTAG to stimulate early engagement in the development plan process and to try and ensure greater certainty around delivery of proposals. The report explained that the consultation on DPMTAG concludes on 15th November, 2010 and the proposed response on behalf of the SDPA, in conjunction and agreed with Nestrans was appended to the report.

The report explained that the stated aim of the document is to enable Transport Scotland to support the principle of the land use allocations and transport intervention set out in development plans as they affect the strategic transport network. Essentially, DPMTAG attempts to establish some clarity around different levels of appraisal that will be required to support proposed land releases into strategic and local development plans. It will cover all of Scotland and makes allowances for areas of lower growth and recognises that there is a difference between the level of detail available and therefore level of appraisal required for local over strategic development plans. It further recognises that the level of transport appraisal it outlines will require time and resources that may prove challenging within the development plan preparation timetable.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority –

- (a) note the content of the report; and
- (b) agree the consultation response as appended.

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the consultation response appended to the report.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN MAIN ISSUES REPORT – EARLY ENGAGEMENT

3. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which informed members of the early engagement taking place in advance of the preparation of a Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for consultation in mid-2011. The report also sought authority for a response from the Authority to the comments received from the consultation authorities on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report.

The report explained that MIR's are key documents in terms of effective engagement on SDP's. They are the principal opportunity within the plan preparation process for productively consulting stakeholders on the content of the Plan and for involving the wider public. MIR's are not draft versions of the Plan, but should concentrate on the key changes that have occurred since the previous Plan and on the Authority's big ideas for future development.

The report also provided information on a key agency/stakeholder meeting held on 30th August, 2010; provided details on climate change and transport appraisals and provided details of a briefing note for community councils and councillors.

The report explained that the first stage of the SEA process for the preparation of a SDP requires the production of a scoping report. The purpose of the scoping report is to:-

- set out the level of detail to be considered in the environmental report;
- set out the framework to be used in assessing the environmental effects of the SDP; and
- specify the period that the responsible authority intend to consult on the environmental report.

The scoping report was submitted to the consultation authorities through the SEA gateway on 2nd July, 2010 and was made available on the SDPA website. Appended to the report was a table of all of the comments received from the consultation authorities and a proposed response to these comments.

The report explained that the consultation authorities expressed contentment with the quality, clarity and thorough nature of the scoping report. The scoping report specified a twelve week period for consultation on the environmental report and the consultation authorities confirmed that they were content with this.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority –

- (a) agree the Authority's response to the consultation authorities as detailed in the appendix to the report; and
- (b) note the actions being taken to facilitate early engagement on the Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report.

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

BUDGET MONITORING AND PROPOSALS 2011/12 - 2013/14

4. The Authority had before it a report prepared by the Treasurer which asked the Authority to note the budget monitoring for the period to July 2010 and to agree a proposal to delay consideration of a budget proposal for 2011/12 until later in the year.

The report explained that although there is an option of presenting a three year budget proposal to the two councils at this time, it is felt appropriate this year, given budget uncertainties and the need to better define the opportunities for closer working with the two councils, Nestrans and ACSEF, to defer the submission of a budget proposal for 2011/12 until later in the year. The report explained that if this was acceptable to the Authority, an approach would be taken to the budget proposals which seeks to increase integration with the two councils, Nestrans and ACSEF to reduce overall costs.

The report provided information on property and related costs, administration costs and professional staff resource costs. In relation to the staff resources costs, the report explained that the current SDPA staff structure comprises an SDPA manager, two senior planners and two planners. The report explained that one senior planning post has been vacant since June and one planning post has been vacant since early August, 2010. The report further explained that more recently, an additional member of the team commenced a secondment with Aberdeenshire Council in early September 2010. Therefore savings through vacancy management had been achieved while a permanent staffing solution is agreed.

The report explained that in light of the current budget pressures and the offer of assistance from both councils, as well as Nestrans, in taking the transport and transport appraisal elements of plan preparation forward, it is proposed not to fill the vacant posts meantime. The report outlined that this should not impact on the capacity of the SDPA to deliver outcomes and in the short term, prior to final decisions being made on recruitment to fill the vacant post, resources will be used from both councils to progress current workstreams.

The Authority then heard from the Treasurer who explained that due to the underspend in the staff budget he would prepare a report for the next meeting of the Authority proposing a virement between the staffing budget and project line budgets to allow the progression of projects accordingly.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority –

- (a) note the budget monitoring position to July 2010 (as detailed in the report); and
- (b) agrees to delay the presentation of a budget proposal for 2011/12 for consideration by the two council partners until later in the year.

The Authority resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Treasurer would submit a report to the next meeting of the Authority proposing a virement between the staffing budget and specific project line budgets; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Chairperson intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)4(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Authority to consider the external auditor's report to members of the Authority for 2009/10.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10 AND THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE AUTHORITY 2009/10

5. The Authority had before it a report by the Treasurer which presented Audit Scotland's final accounts for the Authority in financial year 2009/10 and which provided the External Auditor's report to members of the Authority for the same financial year.

The Authority were then addressed by Maggie Bruce of Audit Scotland who briefly spoke to the report.

The report explained that the 2009/10 audit process was now complete and that the proposed audit opinion resulting from the International Standard on Auditing 260 report was unqualified. The report outlined that the accounts had been adjusted for the return of part of the General Fund balance from 2008/09 which had been agreed by members in December, 2009.

Maggie Bruce thanked the Treasurer and his staff for their work in allowing Audit Scotland to finalise their report earlier than the required deadline.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority –

- (a) acknowledge the report submitted by Audit Scotland on the 2009/10 audit;
- (b) note the proposed audit opinion on the 2009/10 financial statements (as detailed in the report); and
- (c) acknowledge the help and assistance offered by Audit Scotland in the audit process.

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

HOUSING LAND AUDIT 2010

6. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of the Authority of 18th September, 2009 the Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which advised members of the results of the 2010 Housing Land Audit.

The report explained that the purpose of the annual Housing Land Audit is to measure the quantity of land available for new housing in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The report outlined that the process for augmenting the supply through the new set of Local Development Plans is now well advanced. Within Aberdeenshire, the Local Development Plan was approved by Council on 24th June, 2010.

The report explained that Aberdeen City Council reported its proposed Local Development Plan to Council on 18th August, 2010. The Plan was approved after changes were made by the Council. The Development Plan Scheme sets out a timetable for adoption and it is expected that the Plan will be adopted by April 2012.

The report concluded that the effective housing land supply identified in the 2010 audit is 5,019 units in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and 2,832 units in the Rural Housing Market Area. This equates to a housing land supply of two and a half years and four and a half years respectively when measured against the Structure Plan requirement. It is therefore important this supply is augmented through the adoption of new Local Development Plans as quickly as possible.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority note the contents of the 2010 Housing Land Audit and endorse the Councils' approach to address the effective housing land supply through the rapid preparation and adoption of new Local Development Plans.

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

SDPA INFORMATION BULLETIN – SEPTEMBER 2010

7. The Authority had before it an information bulletin providing information on a number of issues such as:-

- Strategic Development Plan Area Population Projections
- Strategic Development Plan Area Household Projections
- Housing Market Activity
- Housing Need and Demand Assessment
- Scotland's Zero Waste Plan
- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- Local Development Plan Progress
- Enquiry Into the Relationship Between Transport and Land Use Planning
- Cumulative Transport Appraisal
- SDPA Website Statistics (October 2009 – June 2010)
- National Design Awards

The Authority resolved:-

to note the details contained in the information bulletin

- **PETER ARGYLE, Chairperson.**