

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

Date: 3 December 2010

Title: Land Use Strategy Consultation

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose a response from the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) to the Scottish Government's consultation on a 'Land Use Strategy for Scotland'.

2. Background

2.1 Scotland's first National Planning Framework was published in 2004 and this was replaced by National Planning Framework 2 in 2009, prepared under the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006. This guides Scotland's development to 2030 and sets out strategic development priorities to support sustainable economic growth. Development plans are required to have regard to the National Planning Framework during their preparation.

2.2 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (s57 – found in Annex C to the consultation document), introduced a requirement for the Scottish Government to prepare a land use strategy for Scotland by the end of March 2011 and update it at least every 5 years. The Act requires the strategy to set out:

- a) the Scottish Ministers' objectives in relation to sustainable land use;
- b) their proposals and policies for meeting those objectives; and
- c) the timescales over which those proposals and policies are expected to take effect.

2.3 The strategy is designed to deal with broad issues relating to the sustainable use of land, primarily (but not exclusively) in relation to rural land uses and in situations where the statutory planning and development management system does not apply. As such, it sits alongside National Planning Framework 2.

2.4 The consultation document was published on 23 September 2010 and has a closing date of 17 December 2010.

3 Consultation

3.1 The stated purpose of the draft strategy is:

"To guide, support and inform all those involved in deciding how land is to be used, by setting out a vision and long-term objectives for an integrated approach to sustainable land use in Scotland."

- 3.2 Supporting the vision are three objectives (each with an associated strategic direction) and 10 principles for sustainable land use (p8).
- 3.3 The consultation paper recognises the wide range of goods and services provided by the land (such as food, timber, recreation, water quality, flood alleviation, biodiversity and carbon storage) and that land often has a multifunctional use. It also recognises that these need to be managed in such a way as to maximise the benefit to Scotland as a whole and not be seen in isolation. Key to this is seen as successful decision-making that is sufficiently well informed to understand and determine the appropriate trade-offs whenever this is required.
- 3.4 While the draft land use strategy seeks to deal with broader considerations relating to the sustainable use of land, including where the statutory planning and development management systems do not apply, there are a range of elements which represent a considerable crossover with land use planning. Section 2.6 of the strategy identifies that the statutory policy framework for development decisions is, and continues to be, provided by National Planning Framework 2, Scottish Planning Policy and statutory development plans.
- 3.5 The consultation paper is attached as Appendix 1.

4 Proposed Response

- 4.1 It is proposed to limit the response of the SDPA to those issues that impact on its interests and functions. This means that the response will only address issues impacting on the preparation and implementation of strategic development plans.
- 4.2 The proposed response welcomes the production of the draft land use strategy in seeking to take a holistic view of land use and set it within the context of climate change and the need to move towards a low carbon economy.
- 4.3 It goes on to consider the relationship between the land use strategy, the national planning framework and forthcoming Scottish national marine plan, highlighting potential mechanisms to improve the clarity of relationships between them. Two potential solutions to this challenge in the context of future iterations of the strategy would be to:
- ensure a clearer dividing line between policy material; or
 - to combine the land use strategy and the national planning framework into one document.
- 4.5 The proposed response also highlights the lack of clearly identifiable implementation mechanisms which are in the hands of the Scottish Government. However, it also notes that aligning regulation, incentives and other policies with the desired strategic direction would make a valuable contribution towards sustainable land use in Scotland.
- 4.6 Appendix 2 contains a draft letter to the Scottish Government in response to the consultation.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the SDPA:

- a) welcomes the moves by the Scottish Government to increase the integration of land use decision-making; and
- b) agrees Appendix 2 as its response to the consultation.

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