

SDPA Bulletin – December 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. Conserve and Save: The Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland

- 1.1. In October 2009, the Scottish Government undertook consultation on this document; setting the context and presenting a broad range of options for energy efficiency in the domestic, business and public sector. This was not limited to buildings, but included sections on the transport system and opportunities for Scottish companies to take advantage of new markets.
- 1.2. The publication of the Action Plan provides an opportunity for the SDPA to consider if a policy response is required in either the main issues report or strategic development plan.
- 1.3. Domestic energy efficiency is one area where significant improvement could potentially be made as 29% of all energy consumed in Scotland goes to heat rooms and water, provide lighting and power appliances in homes. Apart from encouraging behaviour change, which is a theme throughout the document, the rollout of 'smart meters' and requirement for energy performance certificates when properties are sold or rented it is hoped will raise awareness and result in demand for energy efficient homes.
- 1.4. These measures are backed up with the prospect of future regulation in this area where advice and support have been unsuccessful. The document states that a further Ministerial report on the Government's position on regulation will be published by the end of 2011. There is also a suggestion that local authorities will address energy efficiency within their Local Housing Strategies.
- 1.5. Energy efficiency for business seeks early action and transformational change to make non-domestic buildings and business processes more energy efficient. Citing financial and environmental benefits, the Government proposes to take a promotional and advisory approach through various schemes and recognition by awards.
- 1.6. Public sector energy efficiency is seen as of vital importance and is recognised as a duty under the terms of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This will affect the efficiency of existing buildings, where expert technical, behavioural and change management advice will be given and guidance on procurement for new buildings published by March 2011. These measures to be backed up with financial support for projects.

- 1.7. Achieving energy efficiency through Building Standards is seen as critical and a number of measures are outlined, including:
 - the introduction of new energy standards in October 2010 delivering a 30% reduction in emissions compared to 2007 standards and further reviews in 2013 and 2016;
 - considering the impact of introducing new water efficiency standards into building regulations in 2013;
 - exploring the development of a sustainability labelling system for domestic buildings, extended to non-domestic buildings in due course;
 - the introduction of improved energy efficiency measures in October 2010 for extensions, conversions and minor works; and
 - exploring options in 2010-11 for improving the energy efficiency of existing non-domestic buildings with the intention of developing regulations for 2012.
- 1.8. Infrastructure for the built environment is another area where there is great potential to help deliver energy efficiency. The Scottish Government's aim to do this by promoting design solutions (Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative and Designing Streets) and developing district heating as a policy area. The capacity for district heating is largely unknown and, in line with National Planning Framework 2, the document reiterates that planning authorities should take account of the potential for developing heat networks when preparing development plans and considering major development proposals.
- 1.9. Planning policy and permitted development rights related to micro-renewables will be in place by April 2011 and the obligations of Section 72 of the Climate Change Act requires local development plans to ensure that new buildings avoid a proportion of projected emissions through microgeneration. Scottish Water is required to prepare a plan making it clear how it intends to promote water conservation and efficiency, including a metering trial and how building standards may change in 2013.
- 1.10. Changing how we use our transport system includes reducing the need to travel, improving sustainable travel choices and reducing energy consumption in the transport network. This may be achieved through existing activity and a combined approach to support for low carbon vehicles and refuelling infrastructure, ensuring efficiency in the truck road network and developing emission reduction techniques for the rail industry.
- 1.11. The document concludes that local authorities will implement much of the energy efficiency activity at the local level. This is to be done by influencing communities and individual's behaviour through delivery of services, their role in planning and leadership in local planning partnerships.
- 1.12. In terms of implications for the SDPA, the existing structure plan already contains many of the messages related to energy efficient buildings, water efficiency and use of the transport network. Until further regulation is in place, it will be challenging to add further obligations in these areas. It is clear that responsibility may also increasingly lie within building standards regulations and local housing strategies.
- 1.13. However, the SDPA can continue to work with energy infrastructure providers to facilitate appropriate projects related to de-carbonising energy and ensuring

security of supply. One area where the SDPA may wish to undertake more work is on district heating and heat mapping in an effort to provide more decentralised patterns of energy production and supply. This could involve mapping where heat demand is high (using gas demand data) and identifying sites where heat is currently being wasted (by talking to organisations that are likely to have significant amounts of waste heat). Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire already have several examples of the use of district heating, however, a more strategic approach to mapping potential for future schemes is currently being undertaken in Aberdeen City. This should be discussed with the respective planning policy teams and other experts in the two councils to determine the best planning policy response.

2. Local Development Plan

- 2.1 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan and associated documents were published on 24 September 2010 to mark the beginning of a 12 week consultation period. The Proposed Plan is Aberdeen City Council's settled view on what should be included in the adopted Local Development Plan. The plan sets out a total of 49 policies to guide future development and shows where up to 21,000 new homes might be built on greenfield sites to create sustainable new communities. It also identifies almost 200 hectares of land for employment use to support the sustainable economic growth of the city. Events were held across the City throughout November to give advice on the process and how to make representations. The consultation period for these documents will close on Friday 17 December 2010.
- 2.2 Objections which cannot be resolved will be examined by an independent person, a Reporter, from the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals. The Reporter will consider objections and suggested changes before presenting recommendations to the City Council. The Council must take on board the conclusions before adopting the Local Development Plan, which is expected to be in the first half of 2012.
- 2.3 The period for representations on the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and its associated supplementary guidance closed on 1 October 2010. A total of 2,829 responses were received, although there is a significant number which are duplicates because of the multiple ways in which responses were identified. A process of grouping issues has been undertaken resulting in the identification of 141 issues, with up to 331 responses relating to each one.
- 2.4 Relevant to the Strategic Development Plan Authority are the number of responses that cite issues of overall settlement strategy (58 responses), that part of the settlement strategy that relates to the Local Needs and Diversification Areas (158 responses), and housing land supply (153 responses). Other topics that have generated a large number of responses include the affordable housing, layout siting and design and development in the countryside policies.
- 2.5 In relation to site based comments, representations have been made regarding Aberdeenshire Council's proposed distribution of development within the

Strategic Growth Areas, with a significantly different strategy being suggested in all cases except Peterhead.

- 2.6 Aberdeenshire Council hopes to present the summaries of the issues to Area Committees in late January 2011, and to submit the Proposed Plan for examination in March 2011.

3. Scottish and Southern Energy Consultation

- 3.1 Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) recently undertook a consultation entitled “The future of electricity transmission in the north of Scotland”. This sets out the priorities of SSE in managing the network post-2013 and identification of what they need to deliver in terms of outputs. These outputs are categorised under the following headings:
- Environmental impact
 - Network reliability and availability
 - Conditions for network connections
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Safe network services

- 3.2 Given that the structure plan has several references to the energy industry and its infrastructure, officers submitted a response to this consultation. This reinforced the importance of working with SSE to facilitate necessary developments and some detailed comments on “conditions for network connections”. The full response can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Scottish Sustainable Communities Charrette Series

- 4.1 The Scottish Government’s Report on the Charrette Series run as part of the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative was published on 22 October (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/260590/0105938.pdf>). This report gives a summary of the process to date and details on the three sites (one of which – Grandhome – is in the structure plan area). Outputs from the charrette held in March 2010 and published in the report include the design principles, an illustrated masterplan, detailed diagrams and a phasing strategy.
- 4.2 This work has been carried out alongside, but separate from the local development plan (LDP) process. The advantages of conducting this engagement and design process early in the planning process is recognised by the report as beneficial in speeding up delivery once the LDP is adopted, should the site be included in the adopted plan.
- 4.3 The creation of sustainable mixed communities is a key objective of the structure plan and working with partners through the Scottish Sustainable Communities was an action identified in the plan to help implement this ambition.

5. Scotland's Digital Future and the "Race to Infinity"

- 5.1 In October 2010 the Scottish Government published "A Digital Ambition for Scotland" (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/127313/0105923.pdf>). This recognises the centrality of digital technology to enabling Scotland to meet its potential and to promote sustainable economic growth.
- 5.2 The Scottish Government's stated ambition for Scotland's digital future is:
- That next generation broadband will be available to all by 2020, and significant progress will be made by 2015; and
 - That the rate of broadband uptake by people in Scotland should be at or above the UK average by 2013, and should be the highest among the UK nations by 2015.
- 5.3 The document recognises that achieving this ambition will require co-ordinated action from a wide range of stakeholders in the public and private sectors. The Scottish Government have committed to preparing a more detailed strategy and action plan by January 2011.
- 5.4 Aberdeen City and Shire does not currently feature in the published roll-out plans of BT or Virgin Media for next-generation broadband, although both councils, ACSEF and the SDPA are all engaging with infrastructure providers to influence investment decisions.
- 5.5 Officers have responded to the "Ambitions" paper to outline the importance of ensuring that new development is not being served by obsolete broadband infrastructure in line with the position set out in the structure plan.
- 5.6 In a separate but related development, BT recently launched an online competition called "The Race to Infinity" (<http://www.racetoinfinity.bt.com>). This seeks to gauge demand for fast broadband services throughout the UK and promises to serve the five telephone exchanges with the highest level of expressed demand by early 2012. A number of conditions apply but the exercise requires members of the public and businesses to vote on the website for fast broadband services from their telephone exchange by the end of 2010. This information is also likely to influence their ongoing infrastructure investment decisions.
- 5.7 Officers are continuing to working with ACSEF and the two councils to influence the infrastructure delivery programmes of next generation broadband providers.

6. Structure Plan Proposals

- 6.1 Three key proposals set out in the structure plan have made significant steps forward over the last few months.

New Peterhead Prison

- 6.2 Consultants working on behalf of the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) are progressing with the replacement prison in Peterhead. Plans for HMP Grampian were on display at a public event held in Peterhead on 21 October. This public consultation was part of the pre-application process. The planning application

for the proposal (http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/apps/detail.asp?ref_no=APP/2010/3628) was lodged by the Scottish Prison Service on 8 November 2010.

Community Stadium

- 6.3 The planning application for the new community stadium was received by Aberdeen City Council in August 2010 for a site at Loriston Loch. A date for a pre-determination hearing has been identified of 14 January 2011. The application will be considered by the full Council later in 2011.

Third Don Crossing

- 6.4 The planning application for the Third Don Crossing was submitted earlier in 2010 and the SDPA consulted in May; with a response returned in June. The next significant stage in the determination of the proposal will be a pre-determination hearing to be held on 14 December. Thereafter, the application will be considered by the Development Management Sub-committee of Aberdeen City Council.

7. Scottish Transport Awards 2010

- 7.1 Nestrans submitted a nomination for the above awards in the "Policy Integration" category. The submission was for the joint work done by the two councils, Nestrans and the SDPA in assessing the cumulative impacts of the two local development plans on the transport network. The results of this project were reported to the September meeting of the SDPA.
- 7.2 Although shortlisted, the submission was unsuccessful on this occasion.

8. Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2010

- 8.1 A total of 33 entries were made for the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2010 under the four categories of Development Plan, Development Management, Development on the Ground and Community Involvement.
- 8.2 Three projects have been shortlisted from Aberdeen City and Shire for this year's awards, these are the Robert Gordon University Masterplan, the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan and a mixed use development in Aberdeenshire (by Scotia Homes at Rothienorman). Further information on these and other entries can be found on the Scottish Government website (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/National-Planning-Policy/awards/2010Competition>).
- 8.3 Commendations and awards will be made at a ceremony in March 2011.

9. Aberdeenshire Design Awards 2010

- 9.1 The Aberdeenshire Design Awards have been a bi-annual event since their inception in 1998. The 2010 Awards were presented at Haddo House, Methlick on 2 September 2010. A total of 22 awards were made under seven categories as set out in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Aberdeenshire Design Awards 2010

Public Art	Radio Square, Fraserburgh	Commended
Rural Landscape Design	Portlethen Moss, Portlethen	Commended
	The Viewing Pavilion, Ellon	Commended
Business	Starfish Studio, Johnshaven	Highly Commended
	Subsea 7 Campus, Westhill	Highly Commended
Housing	Little Maldron Mill, Torphins	Commended
	The Quay, Newburgh	Commended
	West Shore Gardens, Fraserburgh	Commended
	West Pavilion, Warehouse	Commended
	Comers of Kebbaty Croft, Midmar	Highly Commended
	Hill of Morpie, St Cyrus	Highly Commended
Sustainability	Comers of Kebbaty Croft, Midmar	Distinction
Craftsmanship	Thornton Aisle, Marykirk	Commended
	2/4 Old Castlegate, Banff	Commended
	Pitfour Chapel, Mintlaw	Highly Commended
	Craigievar Castle, Alford	Distinction
Conservation	Laurencekirk Station, Laurencekirk	Commended
	Craigievar Castle, Alford	Highly Commended
	Lecht Cottage, Coull	Highly Commended
	2/4 Old Castlegate, Banff	Highly Commended
	Pitfour Chapel, Mintlaw	Highly Commended
	Salmon Bothy, Portsoy	Distinction
Ian Shepherd Award	Salmon Bothy, Portsoy	

9.2 In addition to the seven categories, the Ian Shepherd Award was given for the first time, presented to the project which was considered to be the best of all entries attaining formal recognition at the awards ceremony; a scheme which not only resonates in the quality of its execution but also makes a positive contribution to the wider environment and sets a benchmark for future projects. This award was given to the Salmon Bothy, Portsoy.

9.3 Further information on all the winning entries will be on the Aberdeenshire Council website (http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/built_heritage/design_awards.asp) in the next few weeks.

10. The resilience of Scottish local economies

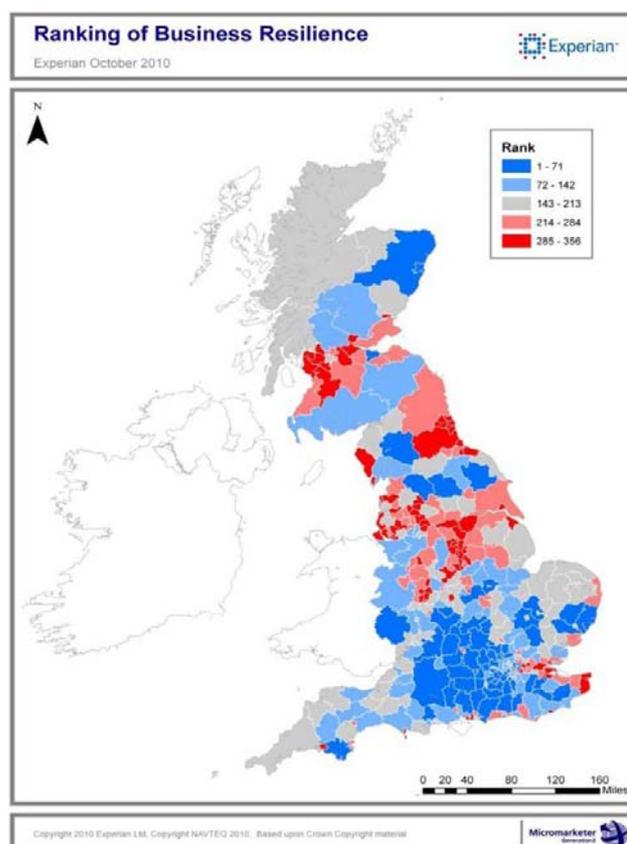
10.1 Recently published research has identified Aberdeen City and Shire as the most economically resilient part of Scotland and performing well when compared with the rest of the UK.

10.2 The analysis, by Experian measured the resilience of local economies in different council areas using a 'resilience ranking' based on a range of factors from business start-up and insolvency rates to the proportions of the economy vulnerable in the current economic climate and the proportion in more resilient sectors.

10.3 Aberdeenshire (1/32) and Aberdeen City (2/32) were ranked as the most economically resilient out of the 32 local authority areas in Scotland and ranked 20th and 56th out of 356 in the UK. A full list of the Scottish local authorities with their Scottish and UK rankings is provided in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Economic Resilience of Scottish Local Authorities

1. Aberdeenshire (22)
2. Aberdeen City (56)
3. Edinburgh (62)
4. Orkney (80)
5. Stirling (94)
6. Perth and Kinross (95)
7. Scottish Borders (107)
8. Dumfries and Galloway (129)
9. Shetland (150)
10. Angus (157)
11. Highland (159)
12. Moray (180)
13. Argyll & Bute (184)
14. Glasgow (194)
15. South Ayrshire (216)
16. East Dunbartonshire (218)
17. Eilean Siar (219)
18. East Lothian (236)
19. Midlothian (260)
20. Fife (265)
21. South Lanarkshire (270)
22. West Lothian (273)
23. East Renfrewshire (286)
24. East Ayrshire (289)
25. Renfrewshire (294)
26. Inverclyde (295)
27. Dundee (302)
28. Clackmannanshire (317)
29. North Lanarkshire (319)
30. Falkirk (335)
31. West Dunbartonshire (340)
32. North Ayrshire (342)



Note: UK rankings in brackets are out of 356

Source: Experian and BBC News Websites

http://publicsector.experian.co.uk/~media/Publications/Resilience/Experian_Scotland%20business%20resilience_final.ashx
http://publicsector.experian.co.uk/~media/Publications/Resilience/policy%20insight_autumn%202010_a%20balancing%20act_scotland.ashx
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-11593956>

10.4 It should be noted that the analysis is not of a scale which is able, for example, to pick up the particular challenges being faced in Moray at the current time around the future of its two RAF bases at Lossiemouth and Kinross.

10.5 This research appears to back up evidence previously presented to the SDPA, particularly in relation to the housing market and construction activity in the area.

10.6 A wider ranking exercise which included the themes of community, people and place has also been prepared by Experian but this was limited to local authorities in England.

11.

11. Scottish Government Planning Publications

11.1 Over the last three months the Scottish Government has published three documents particularly relevant to the SDPA:

- [Circular 1/2009 \(Appendix 1: Habitats Regulations\)](#)
- [Planning Advice Note 2/2010: Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits](#)
- [Planning Advice Note 3/2010: Community Engagement](#)

11.2 Each of these is relevant to the preparation of the strategic development plan in general and the Main Issues Report in particular.

12. Glasgow and the Clyde Valley (GCV) Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR)

12.1 Consultation on the above document began on 30 September for an eight week period and is available on the GCV website at www.gcvsdpa.gov.uk/. This MIR follows closely behind TAYplan and SESplan MIRs that came out early this year, meaning three of the four SDPAs have reached this significant stage in producing their strategic development plans.

12.2 The MIR has identified five main issues:

- Breaking down distance to economic markets;
- Supporting a sustainable economy;
- Promoting environmental action – an economic necessity;
- Promoting sustainable locations for development; and
- Tackling risk – strategic development priorities.

12.3 Each of these issues is supported with a section of the MIR giving greater detail and posing questions intended to focus the reader's thinking and provide a framework for their responses. Whilst it is very useful for us to see the form and content of another SDPA's MIR, it is not intended to respond to this consultation as there are no cross-boundary issues to report.

13. Housing Land Supply – Letter from the Chief Planner

13.1 A letter was sent by the Chief Planner at the Scottish Government to all Heads of Planning in Scotland on 29 October 2010 regarding the issue of housing land supply (Appendix 2).

13.2 The letter addresses the subject of housing land supply in the context of the current economic climate and the challenges of obtaining development and mortgage finance. It re-states the Scottish Government policy set out in Scottish Planning Policy (2010) regarding the supply of effective housing land.

13.3 Members will recall that at the September 2010 meeting, the SDPA agreed to:

“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”.

13.4 The response of the two councils was therefore both clear and unambiguous. Both councils are keen to work with developers in their preparation of masterplans for sites identified in the respective proposed local development plans. This will help to ensure that swift progress with consent and construction can be made once the local development plans have been adopted.

14. Planning Development Programme: Case Study

14.1 The Scottish Government is working with Heads of Planning Scotland, COSLA, the Improvement Service, Key Agencies and representatives of the private sector to identify and highlight examples of good practice. It has commissioned the Improvement Service to prepare a range of case studies as a way of promoting good practice in the planning system from around Scotland.

14.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was selected as one of the initial tranche of case studies, focusing on the use of plain English as well as the production of the audio version of the plan. The case study emphasises the value to be gained by working with the third sector (the Plain English Campaign and the Grampian Society for the Blind) to improve service delivery.

14.3 A copy of the draft case study prepared by the Improvement Service can be found at Appendix 3 and will be available on the Scottish Government website (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/planning/modernising/cc/GoodPractice>), along with a range of other case studies, over the next few weeks.