

**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY
WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN
FRIDAY, 3 DECEMBER, 2010**

Present: Councillor Argyle, Chairperson; Councillors Cox, Dean, Hunter, Merson, Pratt, Stewart, Webster and West (as substitute for Councillor Cormie).

Apologies: Councillors Boulton and Cormie.

Officers: **Strategic Development Plan Team;**
Strategic Development Plan Manager and Senior Planner.
Aberdeen City Council;
Head of Planning and Sustainable Development.
Aberdeenshire Council
Head of Planning and Building Standards, Principal Accountant and
Committee Officer (Miss V Rushton).

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Authority had before it a minute of its meeting of 10 September, 2010.

The Authority resolved:-

To approve the minute, subject to the amendment of a number of typographical errors.

ACTION PROGRAMME EXCEPTION REPORT

2. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which provided the Strategic Development Plan Authority (SDPA) with an Exception Report on the Structure Plan action programme. The report highlighted that this was the first Exception Report on the action programme to be submitted before Members, and officers summarised the report.

In response to questions, it was highlighted that the report detailed those actions for which progress against identified milestones had not been made, and these were more fully explained in Appendix 1 to the report. Members welcomed the progress that had been made with the Airport Masterplan as funding for the runway extension had recently been confirmed by BAA.

In relation to the Aberdeenshire Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) the Appendix highlighted the need for the project to await the Court of Session ruling before any further progress could be made. It was highlighted that this delay was also impacting on the timescale for the delivery of other transport infrastructure. Some Members expressed concern over the time taking for the AWPR in the Court of Session and the knock-on impact on the delivery of various elements of the Structure Plan, especially the related transport projects. It was recognised that there was little that could be done until a decision was reached by the court and that the Officers of the SDPA were looking at the risks involved in preparing the new Strategic Development Plan. Members indicated that the SDPA should issue a statement detailing that the Authority was disappointed that the issues surrounding the AWPR had not been resolved and that they remained committed to the project as a critical component of the strategy for the area.

Members expressed concern at the potential changes to the policy position of the Scottish Government on planning for waste and that this had caused delay in progressing the supplementary guidance highlighted in the structure plan. As a consequence of the potential implications of these changes it was agreed that the Chair would write to the appropriate Minister to highlight the Authority's concerns.

Comment was also made in relation to Planning Gain and it was indicated that Stewart Robertson, the Planning Gain Officer for Aberdeenshire should be invited to attend a future meeting.

The report recommended that the Authority:-

- (a) note the contents of the report; and
- (b) consider the exceptions highlighted in Appendix 1 and approve the next steps in progressing the implementation of the Structure Plan.

The Authority resolved

To approve the recommendations contained in the report, and that,

- i) a letter be sent to the appropriate Minister on the zero waste plan highlighting that there can't be a national solution for the whole of Scotland and the process needed to be locally driven. It was also anticipated that each Council would write to the Minister expressing similar views.
- ii) a statement be issued highlighting the Authority's concern over the length of time taken to progress the AWPR and that they remained committed to the project.

LAND USE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

3. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which informed Members of a proposed response from the SDPA to the Scottish Government consultation on a Land Use Strategy for Scotland. The report detailed that the strategy was 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 did not apply. As such it sat alongside the National Planning Framework 2. It was highlighted that the land use strategy needed to be prepared by March 2011. Officers advised that the response was limited to the remit of the SDPA, to those issues that impacted on its interests and functions.

The report recommended the Authority:-

- (a) welcome the move the Scottish Government to increase the integration of land use decision making, and
- (b) agree to appendix 2 and its response the consultation.

The Authority resolved:-

To approve the recommendations contained within the report.

AMENDMENTS TO THE MODERNISED PLANNING SYSTEM CONSULTATION

4. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which proposed a response from the SDPA to the Scottish Government consultation on amendments to the modernised planning system. The consultation document recognised that the efficient operation of the planning system was important in supporting planning's contribution to sustainable economic growth. The changes proposed had been informed by discussions with key stakeholders to refine legislative requirements and were largely seen as facilitating increased efficiency and removing anomalies. Officers highlighted that the response would be limited to those changes that would impact on the preparation and implementation of the Strategic Development Plan. It was highlighted that the two Councils may submit separate responses in addition to that from the Authority.

There were three main issues that had potential impacts for the SDPA. This was in relation to Flood Management; Marine Planning; and Regional Spatial Strategies. Generally these were welcomed, but it was highlighted that the SDPA had to take account of important linkages between the documents. Officers highlighted that Marine Scotland's Marine Region Boundaries consultation had now been published and the deadline for responding was 18 February 2011 (before the next meeting of the Authority). It was proposed that the Chair and Vice-chair consider the response and it be homologated at the next meeting of the Authority.

Members expressed concern over marine planning and indicated that the boundaries would be a key issue for the SDPA as it was highlighted that there were a possible five options for boundaries covering the SDPA area. It was important to assess how the SDPA could interact with a diverse boundary, as Aberdeenshire particularly, could be divided up in a variety of ways. Some Members expressed concern that there was a huge offshore potential for renewable energy resources and it was important to ensure that this was balanced with other competing industries and it was felt further discussions were required. Members were advised that a copy of a draft consultation response would be circulated to all Members by email for their views before the Chair and Vice-chair agreed the provisional response to be submitted, prior to homologation at the next meeting.

The report recommended the Authority:-

- (a) welcome the move by the Scottish Government to increase the efficiency of the modernised planning system;
- (b) agree Appendix 2 to the report as its response to the consultation; and
- (c) agree that a provisional response to Marine Scotland's marine region boundaries consultation be approved by the Chair and Vice Chair, if required, and that the consultation be reported and response homologated at the next meeting of the SDPA.

The Authority resolved:-

to agree the recommendations as detailed in the report and that a draft response to the Marine Regions Boundaries consultation be circulated to Members for comment prior to the response being agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair.

CONSULTATION ON SUSTAINABILITY LABELLING WITHIN BUILDING STANDARDS

5. The Authority had before it a report by the Strategic Development Plan Manager which proposed a response from the SDPA to the Scottish Government's consultation on Sustainability Labelling within Building Standards. The consultation paper noted that the Buildings (Scotland) Act 2003 allowed Scottish Ministers to regulate for the purpose of furthering the achievement of sustainable development. It identified that good progress had been made in relation to energy and accessibility through increasing standards over time in Sections 1 to 6 of the Technical Handbooks. Scottish Ministers considered that at this time it was not appropriate to require all new building in Scotland to incorporate higher environmental performance standards beyond that required by the building regulations. It did however, recognise that developers may wish to gain recognition for building to higher standards and funding bodies might seek to make construction to a higher standard a condition of funding. The report also highlighted that planning authorities might wish to consider making construction to a higher standard a condition of planning consent.

Officers indicated that it was proposed to limit the response of the SDPA to those changes that directly impacted on its interest and functions and that the response would only address issues impacting on the preparation and implementation of the Structure Plan and future strategic development plans. In addition, the response would not address matters of a technical nature around the standards themselves or their verification.

During discussions some Members indicated that they hoped that some of the technical measures would be left as aspirational rather than prescriptive. However, others highlighted the advantages of building to enhanced standards as this made them easier to maintain and adapt to use over time. It was highlighted that for projects such as design guidance for the Energetica corridor, its distinctiveness from the new local development plans (which themselves included higher sustainability) may be appropriate. A debate on these issues would have to be considered in the future by both Councils.

The report recommended the Authority:-

- (a) welcome the moves by the Scottish Government to identify consistent sustainability standards for new buildings across Scotland; and
- (b) agree Appendix 3 as a response to the consultation.

The Authority resolved

to agree the recommendations as contained within the report.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT 2009/10 AND THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE SDPA 2009/10

6. The Authority had before it a report by the Treasurer which submitted for the information of the Members the audited statement of accounts for 2009/10 and the external auditors report to members for 2009/10.

The report recommended the Authority:-

- (a) Discuss the statement of accounts for 2009/10 and external auditors report.
- (b) Agree the responses to the external auditors action plan and that the responsible offices addresses the issues raised in the action plan as set out in the Appendix to the External Auditors report and
- (c) Agree that £10 charge for a printed copy of the Statement of Accounts be made and that the Statement of Accounts and Audit Scotland's report can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from the SDPA website.

The Authority resolved:-

To agree the recommendations as contained within the report.

SDPA BUDGET MONITORING AND UPDATE ON FUTURE BUDGETS

7. The Authority had before it a report from the Treasurer which asked the Authority to note the budget monitoring for the period to October 2010 and proposed a delay in the consideration of a budget proposal for 2011/12 until 25 March 2011 when the Council budget positions would be clearer.

In response to questions it was highlighted that for 2010/11, given the number of staff vacancies and secondments, £40,000 had been allocated for consultant fees to allow flexibility towards the end of the year in terms of progressing the work of the SDPA, although this hadn't all been committed to date.

The report recommended the Authority:-

- (a) note the budget monitoring position and forecast at October 2010; and
- (b) agree 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

To agree the recommendations as detailed in the report.

SDPA INFORMATION BULLETIN – DECEMBER 2010

8. The Authority had before it an information bulletin providing information on a number of issues which included:-

- Conserve and Save: The Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland,
- Local Development Plan,
- Scottish and Southern Energy Consultation,
- Scottish Sustainable Community Charrette Series,
- Scotland's Digital Future and the Race to Infinity,
- Structure Plan Proposals,
- Scottish Transport Awards 2010,
- Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2010,
- Aberdeenshire Design Awards 2010,
- The Resilience of Scottish Local Economies,
- Scottish Government Planning Publications,
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report,
- Housing Land Supply – Letter from the Chief Planner, and
- Planning Development Programme Case Study.

During discussion Members referred to the letter from the Scottish Government's Chief Planner (to all Heads of Planning in Scotland) which addressed housing land supply issues in the current economic climate. It was highlighted that in September 2010 Members had agreed a response to the Housing Land Audit in which it was indicated that a plan-led approach was appropriate in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and that this would be the approach taken by both councils - which was progressing well. It was indicated that the letter had caused some concern and Members indicated that a letter on behalf of the SDPA should be sent back to the Chief Planner on these issues, expressing the SDPA's view that a plan-led response was appropriate in this area the scale of land release being progressed through the two local development plans and the timetable for the adoption of them.

The Authority resolved:-

To note the details contained in the information bulletin and that a letter be sent to the Chief Planner highlighting the Authority's views on a plan-led planning system, being referred to both councils for their endorsement.