

Strategic Development Plan Briefing Note – May 2011

Background

The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009. This established significant levels of growth for the north east up to 2030. Since approval of this plan, both councils have worked hard to produce local development plans (LDPs) that have updated planning policies and allocated enough land to meet the structure plan allowances. This process has now reached an important stage with both plans submitted to the Scottish Government for examination since March 2011.

Under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) must submit a strategic development plan (SDP) to Ministers within four years of approval of the previous plan; for us by August 2013. The full timetable for this project can be found in the 2011/12 Development Plan Scheme (see over).

Early work

To meet this target we must start work now and the first major step is the preparation of a 'Main Issues Report' (MIR), currently intended to be published in September 2011. This will be the main stage that engagement will take place and we have met with a number of key stakeholders, organisations and groups within and outside the councils.

These meetings have given us the opportunity to learn whether the structure plan is achieving what it intended to and allow us to hear where people think changes should be made. We are also asking for ideas of big projects or issues that have emerged since the last plan and which should be dealt with strategically; i.e. across both councils.

There is a distinct difference between what a SDP and an LDP should contain. SDPs must maintain a broad overview and general policy framework, with guidance on where development should and should not take place. Whereas LDPs build on this with much more detailed policy material and show the precise sites where homes, employment and other uses should go as well as what must be protected.

Your involvement

At this stage, we would like to hear from community councils and others and we would invite you to let us know what you think the main strategic planning issues are, focussing on the changes needed to the current structure plan. This can be done up to the end of June 2011 as we draft the MIR. This is not a formal stage in the process and you will have another chance during the consultation on the MIR between September and December 2011. The SDPA will publish the MIR before any particular decisions have been taken and a series of preferred and alternative options will be given on the main issues identified.

Later stages (2012 and 2013)

The SDPA will consider the representations made to the MIR along with the body of evidence collected and prepare a Proposed Plan. Following a period for representations on this in late 2012, the SDP will be sent to Scottish Ministers (currently expected to be in June 2013) and will be subject to Examination by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA). It is hoped that the plan will be approved by Scottish Ministers in late 2013 or the first half of 2014.

Project Plan

Period	Description	Comments
March 2011	Publication of the Development Plan Scheme 2011/12	This will be informed by a detailed project plan for the strategic development plan.
↓	Preparation of 'Main Issues Report' taking into account the Research/ Studies and the Monitoring Statement	<p>This stage will include the preparation of supporting documentation in addition to undertaking research/studies to inform the Main Issues Report. This will include the preparation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Housing Need and Demand Assessment • a Monitoring Statement • a retail study • a risk assessment of the structure plan • a transport assessment • a climate change study • a draft Action Programme • an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment • a Habitats Regulations Assessment • a Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Report and Interim Environmental Report <p>Engagement will take place with stakeholders (including the Key Agencies) on the form of the plan, the issues that need to be debated and the options available. This engagement will inform the Main Issues Report.</p>
September 2011	Publication of the 'Main Issues Report' and associated documents.	This is followed by a 12-week period for consultation and subsequent analysis of the responses.
↓	Preparation of the 'Proposed Plan'.	This will include updating the various assessments and the preparation of a Proposed Action Programme.
September 2012	Publication of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.	This includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment and Proposed Action Programme.
↓	Formal representation period and analysis of responses.	The representation period is likely to cover a period of 12 weeks.
June 2013	Submission of Proposed Strategic Development Plan to Scottish Ministers	This includes submission of the Proposed Action Programme, Report of Conformity with the Participation Statement, and a note of the issues raised in representations and how they have been taken into account.
↓	Examination of Proposed Strategic Development Plan.	The length of the examination will depend on the scale and nature of objections to the plan.
June 2014	Strategic development plan approved by Scottish Ministers	The action programme will be published within three months of the approval of the plan.

Source: extract from Development Plan Scheme 2011/12

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