

# SDPA Bulletin – December 2011

## 1 Strategic Development Plan Update

- 1.1 The Main Issues Report was published for consultation on 7 October 2011. A press release was issued to coincide with the publication and an advert was placed in the Press and Journal and 11 weekly Aberdeenshire publications over the following week as set out below:

Huntly Express (7 Oct)	Banffshire Journal (12 Oct)
Inverurie Advertiser (7 Oct)	Ellon Times (13 Oct)
Kincardineshire Observer (7 Oct)	Inverurie Herald (13 Oct)
Mearns Leader (7 Oct)	Deeside Piper (14 Oct)
Turriff Advertiser (7 Oct)	Fraserburgh Herald (14 Oct)
Buchan Observer (11 Oct)	

- 1.2 Copies of the consultation material (the Main Issues Report itself, press adverts, the nine supporting reports and leaflets explaining strategic development plans and the importance of strategic planning) were placed in all 55 public libraries in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and all 7 planning offices of the two councils.
- 1.3 Copies of the plan were mailed out to over 280 people and organisations on the SDPA's consultation database as well as all councillors (112) and MPs / MSPs (21). A number of copies were also sent out on request following the start of consultation. An email was also sent to those on the consultation database who had expressed a preference for this method of communication (98) as well as those registered on the SDPA website (145).
- 1.4 The start of consultation received coverage in a number of newspapers and websites in early October
- 1.5 Since the start of the consultation period, meetings have taken place and presentations given to a range of organisations and groups in addition to events organised specifically around the Main Issues Report:
- North East Transport Consultative Forum
  - Homes for Scotland (Grampian House Builders Committee)
  - Aberdeen Land Use Forum
  - Aberdeenshire Community Planning Board
  - Aberdeen City Community Council Forum
  - ACSEF Planning Modernisation Group Forum
  - Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy Group
- 1.6 The SDPA website is a key source of information for people wishing to find out more about the consultation, with all documents available online. Two clear peaks of activity on the website are observable associated with the consultation on the Main Issues Report. On 19 September (when the SDPA reports went

online for the meeting on 23 September) there were 69 visitors to the site, while on 7 October (the publication of the Main Issues Report and start of consultation) saw 79 visitors (with 65 on Monday 10 October). In the first seven weeks of the consultation there were 909 unique visitors who made 1,407 unique visits to the site.

- 1.7 No responses have yet been received to the consultation exercise, although at the time of writing (late November) there is still six weeks to go before the close of the consultation period.

## **2 Local Development Plans Update**

- 2.1 Both councils continue to make good progress towards the adoption of their respective local development plans. Aberdeenshire Council's proposed plan was submitted for examination on 31 March 2011 while Aberdeen City Council's submission was on 10 May 2011.
- 2.2 The Examination into the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan is currently ongoing, with no hearing sessions held. All of the site visits have been completed, as has the majority of the report writing. Two sites are subject to further procedures which were due to be completed by the end of November.
- 2.3 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan continues through its examination with 7 requests for further information from the Scottish Government's Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) and 10 hearing sessions having been completed, with no more hearings anticipated.
- 2.4 For both councils a programme of work has been identified to ensure that on receipt of the report of the examination the plans can progress swiftly to adoption. Considerable work is being undertaken on the Action Programmes to support the plan, with delivery of proposals a key objective for the councils.
- 2.5 In both cases it is still anticipated that the examination process will be concluded around the turn of the year with the publication of the reports of the examinations which will include the Reporters' conclusions and recommendations. Following publication, the two councils have a three month period to publish the modifications to be made and the plan they intend to adopt (the recommendations of the Reporters being largely binding). This is followed by a period of 28 days after which the authority may adopt the plan unless directed not to by the Scottish Ministers.

## **3 Scottish Parliament – Local Government and Regeneration Committee (14 September 2011)**

- 3.1 In September 2011 the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee held a series of round table evidence sessions with the intention of using them to assist in formulating their work programme for the next 12 months. On 14 September the session focussed on planning policy in Scotland and heard evidence from a wide range of organisations (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6397&mode=pdf>).

- 3.2 A number of issues were raised around the timing and content of strategic development plans during the session. Jim Mackinnon, the Chief Planner at the Scottish Government, in responding to these stated that:

“...I think that the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan is a very good example of what a strategic development plan should look like. It is 30 pages and, when it was submitted, we approved it without any modifications...[A]s a process that engaged business and local communities and as a product that is generous in land allocations and sets a clear way ahead, with a clear understanding of the balance of development between the city and the shire, that development plan is a model”.

- 3.3 It is clear from this that the Scottish Government still view the current structure plan as an example of good practice. This can be seen as supporting the evolutionary approach to the preparation of the strategic development plan proposed in the Main Issues Report.

## **4 Scottish Marine Regions and National Marine Plan**

- 4.1 At a previous meeting in March 2011 the SDPA agreed a response to the Marine Scotland consultation on the boundaries of the proposed Scottish Marine Regions.
- 4.2 Marine Scotland has now published an analysis of the written responses to the consultation which is available on the Scottish Government website (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/10/24105640/0>).
- 4.3 A total of 81 responses were received to the consultation representing a wide range of interests from local authorities and research organisations to energy companies and fisheries organisations. Eight responses were made from the Aberdeen City and Shire area.
- 4.4 It is expected that decisions on the boundaries on the marine regions will be made early next year.
- 4.5 Following the publication of a ‘pre-consultation draft’ earlier this year (to which the SDPA responded in June 2011), it is anticipated that a draft National Marine Plan will be published for consultation in Spring 2012, with a final version prepared before the end of 2012.

## **5 Scoping Study for Offshore Wind Farm Development in Scottish Waters**

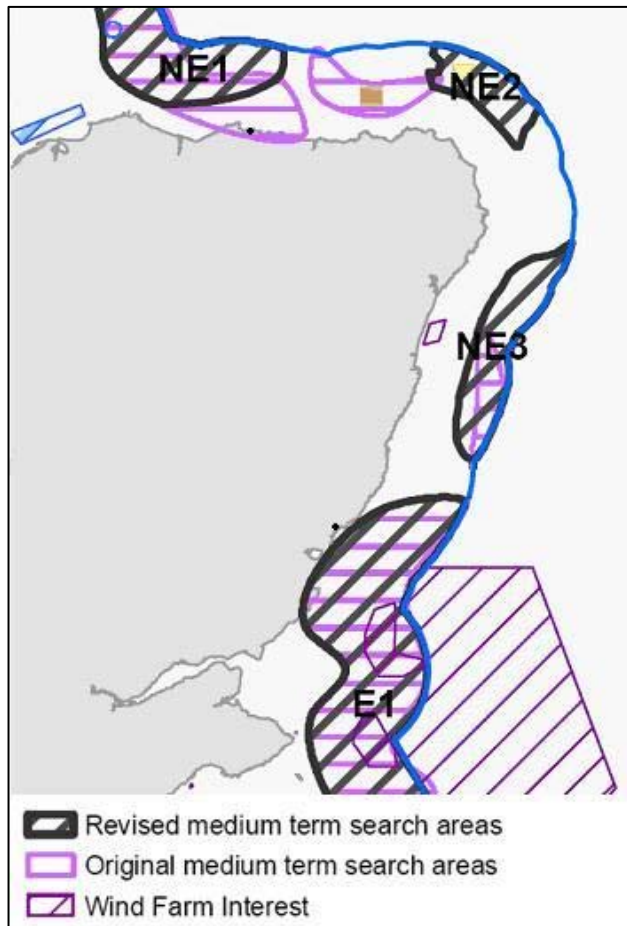
- 5.1 The June 2010 edition of the [SDPA Bulletin](#) reported on a draft plan for offshore wind energy in Scottish territorial waters. The purpose of the Plan was to consider the potential of Scottish Territorial Waters (up to the 12 nautical mile limit) to accommodate offshore wind energy developments from a national perspective. A sieve-mapping exercise was undertaken to identify those areas with the most potential capacity and the least sensitivities. The plan identified four medium-term (2020-2030) opportunities for offshore wind energy off the coast of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

5.2 In March 2011 the Scottish Government published its final plan – [Blue Seas - Green Energy: A Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind Energy in Scottish Territorial Waters](#). In that plan it was highlighted that the medium-term areas of search would be refined over time.

5.3 On 28 November 2011 Marine Scotland (part of the Scottish Government) published a [Scoping Study for Offshore Wind Farm Development in Scottish Waters](#) which reported a refinement of the original exercise and extended its scope from 12 to 200 nautical miles (nm) from the coast. The outputs from this study will inform marine planning processes and the development of regional locational guidelines for offshore wind development.

5.4 The new study continues to identify four areas off the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire coast but they have generally increased in size. Most notable is the increase in the size of area of search NE3 (which has roughly doubled in size) and the easterly move of NE2 compared to the plan published in March 2011. The revised areas of search are presented in figure 1. The report identified further potential beyond 12nm between Fraserburgh and the Tay Estuary.

Figure 1: Revised areas of search for offshore wind energy in Scottish Territorial Waters



## 6 Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

6.1 In the March 2011 edition of the bulletin it was reported that proposals for the deployment of carbon capture and storage technology were being progressed by Scottish Power (in relation to the coal-fired power station at Longannet) and SSE (in relation to the gas-fired power station at Boddam).

6.2 On 19 October 2011 the UK government announced that it had failed to reach agreement with Scottish Power on the terms of financial support for the Longannet project, estimated by Scottish Power at £1.5bn (the UK government has set aside £1bn as part of its CCS demonstration programme). As a consequence, the CCS proposal at Longannet is now unlikely to proceed. As part of that proposal, National Grid had already engaged in considerable pre-application consultation and community engagement in Aberdeenshire over modifications to an existing pipeline and a new facility at St Fergus.

- 6.3 However, the UK Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change made explicit positive references to the proposal at Peterhead when announcing to the House of Commons that the negotiations over Longannet had failed (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/chan209.pdf>). On 8 November 2011 SSE and Shell announced a joint development agreement to progress their proposal at Peterhead power station, emphasising their commitment to the project if appropriate levels of support are available from the UK government and European Union. This project is put forward as a suggested proposal in the Main Issues Report currently subject to consultation.

## **7 Government Economic Strategy 2011**

- 7.1 The Scottish Government published its updated Economic Strategy in September 2011. The [Government Economic Strategy 2011](#) was published after the text of the Main Issues Report was finalised, which refers to the 2007 strategy.
- 7.2 The revised strategy introduces a new strategic priority (“Transition to a low carbon economy”) in addition to rolling forward the existing five priorities (supportive business environment; learning, skills and wellbeing; infrastructure development and place; effective government; and equity). The addition of this new strategic priority is in line with the direction identified in the Main Issues Report, where responding to the challenges and opportunities of climate change is identified as a major influence on the strategic development plan.
- 7.3 The revised strategy will be taken onto account as work progresses on the preparation of the proposed strategic development plan in early 2012.

## **8 TAYplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan and other SDP progress**

### **TAYplan**

- 8.1 At its meeting of [June 2011](#) the SDPA agreed a response to the TAYplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan and Action Programme. The response included a [suggested change](#) to the Proposed Action Programme to recognise the strategic importance of reducing Aberdeen to Edinburgh journey times by train when considering the case for new stations on the East Coast Mainline.
- 8.2 TAYplan considered responses to the consultation on 25 October 2011 (<http://www.tayplan-sdpa.gov.uk/about-us/joint-committee/reports/2011-meetings>) and agreed to submit the proposed plan to Scottish Ministers without making any changes to the plan itself. In total, 188 individuals and organisations submitted representations, raising 1,240 individual issues. A total of 24 “Schedule 4” forms were prepared which group together the unresolved objections.
- 8.3 TAYplan submitted their proposed plan to Scottish Ministers on 1 December 2011.
- 8.4 A total of 41 representations were received to the Proposed Action Programme. Changes to this were made and these included the change suggested by the SDPA which appears on page 29 of the [Updated Proposed Action Programme](#).



### **Glasgow and Clyde Valley SDPA**

- 8.5 The Glasgow and Clyde Valley SDPA submitted their Proposed Strategic Development Plan to Scottish Ministers on 31 October 2011. As with TAYplan, the proposed plan was submitted without modifications. A total of 75 individuals and organisations responded to the proposed plan during the period for representations, with 36 Schedule 4 forms prepared to summarise the unresolved objections. The proposed plan, as submitted, is available online ([http://www.gcvsdpa.gov.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=25](http://www.gcvsdpa.gov.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29&Itemid=25)).

### **SESplan**

- 8.6 The Edinburgh and South East Scotland SDPA (SESplan) published its proposed Strategic Development Plan on 7 November 2011, with a closing date for representations of 19 December 2011 ([www.sesplan.gov.uk](http://www.sesplan.gov.uk)).
- 8.7 Whilst as reported in paragraph 3.2 the Scottish Government consider the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan as a model, all three proposed strategic development plans are quite different in both form and content. This is perhaps not surprising given the different challenges faced by each area and the different responses required. However, discussions with the Scottish Government will take place over the next few months around the lessons that can be learnt from these different approaches and these will be taken into account in the preparation of the proposed plan for Aberdeen City and Shire.

## **9 National Planning Framework 2**

- 9.1 [National Planning Framework 2](#) (NPF2) was published by the Scottish Government in June 2009 following an extensive period of engagement and consultation. NPF2 is a key document in the preparation of the strategic development plan as there is a statutory requirement for the SDPA to have regard to it when formulating the plan.
- 9.2 In June 2011 the Scottish Government published a progress report on NPF2's Action Programme (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212607/0122116.pdf>). This focussed on progress with the national developments identified in NPF2 but also the actions required to implement the five spatial perspectives. An extract of those sections relevant to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire is attached at Appendix 1.
- 9.3 The Scottish Government has started work on the NPF2 Monitoring Report as part of its commitment to keeping the Framework under review. This will be published in late 2011 and will monitor the progress made in implementing NPF2. In doing so it will also consider the key drivers of change and emerging issues to inform future revision of the Framework. The roles of Scotland's cities, the transition to a low carbon economy, and the spatial development implications of Scotland's renewable energy targets will be amongst these. Officers from the SDPA have contributed to this work and the monitoring report will be reported to the next meeting of the SDPA.
- 9.4 Planning legislation requires Scottish Ministers to revise the NPF within 5 years of publication (June 2014), or to publish an explanation of why they have decided not to revise it. The Monitoring Report will inform this process.

## 10 UK-Norway Electricity Interconnector

- 10.1 On 28 September 2011 NorthConnect (<http://www.northconnect.no>) announced that Peterhead was the preferred landing point for its proposed electricity interconnector between the UK and Norway. It also announced that it had submitted an application to National Grid Transmission for an onshore connection to the mainland network at Peterhead for a 1,400MW electricity interconnector between the UK and Norway. SSE is the main UK partner in the NorthConnect consortium.
- 10.2 The UK-Norway interconnector is one of the proposals contained in the Main Issues Report currently subject to consultation.

## 11 Structure Plan Proposals

- 11.1 A number of structure plan proposals have progressed over recent months and an update has been provided for some of these below.

### **East Coast Electricity Transmission Upgrade**

- 11.2 This proposal (<http://www.sse.com/ECR400kV>) is also a 'national development' in NPF2 and involves upgrading the East Coast Electricity Transmission Line from 275kV to 400kV and the development of new and expanded substations along the route between Moray and Perth and Kinross through Aberdeenshire and Angus. In Aberdeenshire the proposal involves a new substation west of Rothienorman, an extension to the existing substation at Leylodge (Kintore) and the re-insulating of the electricity pylons themselves (increasing the insulation between the pylons and the electricity cables at each pylon along the route).
- 11.3 In relation to the Rothienorman substation (<F/APP/2011/2038>), a pre-determination hearing was held on 25 October 2011, with reports considered by the Garioch and Formartine Area Committees on 8 and 15 November respectively. Both Area Committees have indicated their general support for the application and, due to its 'national development' status, the application is due to be decided by a full meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 19 January 2012.
- 11.4 While a Proposal of Application Notice (ENQ/2011/0633) was received by Aberdeenshire Council for the extension of the existing substation at Leylodge (Kintore), an application has yet to be submitted. SSE has indicated that an application is likely to be lodged in January 2012.
- 11.5 The final element of the proposal to impact on this area is an application under section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to the Scottish Government to re-insulate the electricity transmission line itself. Aberdeenshire Council will be a statutory consultee for that application which is expected in Spring 2012.

### **Inveramsay Bridge**

- 11.6 At the end of October 2011 Transport Scotland conducted a public exhibition (<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/road/projects/trunk-road-projects/A96-Inveramsay-Bridge>) for the A96 Inveramsay Bridge improvements. Four options were presented, with one option showing the road going under the railway and the other three with the road going over the railway (see Appendix 2). Responses to the proposals were required by 15 November 2011.
- 11.7 The outcome of the options assessment is due in Spring 2012, along with a recommendation for a preferred option to be taken forward to the design stage. Transport Scotland suggest that an environmental impact assessment and draft road orders will be prepared by Spring 2013. It is anticipated that construction could take place in 2015/16.

### **New Prison (HMP Grampian)**

- 11.8 On 24 October 2011 the Scottish Prison Service announced that it intends to award a contract to Skanska Construction UK Limited to design and construct HMP Grampian in Peterhead and the contract was awarded in early November. HMP Grampian will provide around 500 places for male and female prisoners, with both adults and young offenders being accommodated in a facility which is designed to accommodate prisoners from the Northern Community Justice Authority catchment area. The prison is due to be operational in June 2013.

### **Community Stadium**

- 11.9 Aberdeen Football Club has announced that Barr Construction has been named as the preferred contractor for the £38million stadium at Loirston Loch. Barr said that they hope to conclude the contract to build the stadium by the end of the year and aim to start on site in early 2012. Aberdeen FC is keen for the stadium to be constructed in time for the start of the 2013/14 season.

### **Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route**

- 11.10 On 11 August 2011, Lord Tyre issued his decision on the legal challenge to the decision of the Scottish Ministers on 21 December 2009 to make various orders in connection with the construction of an Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/opinions/2011CSOH131.html>). Lord Tyre found in favour of the Scottish Minister that they had acted within their powers to make these orders and had complied with the legislative requirements. This decision has since been appealed and a hearing is due to take place on 13 – 16 December 2011 in the inner house of the Court of Session.

### **Aberdeen Airport**

- 11.11 The £10m runway extension of 124m at Aberdeen Airport was opened in October 2011, eight months ahead of schedule. This represents a partial implementation of the planning permission it received from Aberdeen City Council in December 2006. This development adds considerable flexibility to the airport in terms of being able to attract new airlines and routes by being able to accommodate larger and newer aircraft and also operate existing aircraft at full passenger and luggage capacity. An assessment of the economic impact of the extension indicates an increase in Gross Value Added to the local economy of £6m by 2015 and 100 full-time equivalent jobs. A revised masterplan is due to be published for consultation in early 2012 which will outline the potential for future development at the airport and what this means in land use planning



terms. The revised masterplan is being prepared on a timescale which will enable it to inform the strategic development plan and its associated action programme.

### **Third Don Crossing**

- 11.12 Planning permission was granted for the new bridge over the River Don by Aberdeen City Council in March 2011. A public local inquiry into the use of compulsory purchase orders for the acquisition of land for the delivery of the new bridge started on 29 November 2011 and was due to last four or five days. Aberdeen City Council has requested that Transport Scotland include the new bridge in the contract for the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (along with a number of other road schemes).

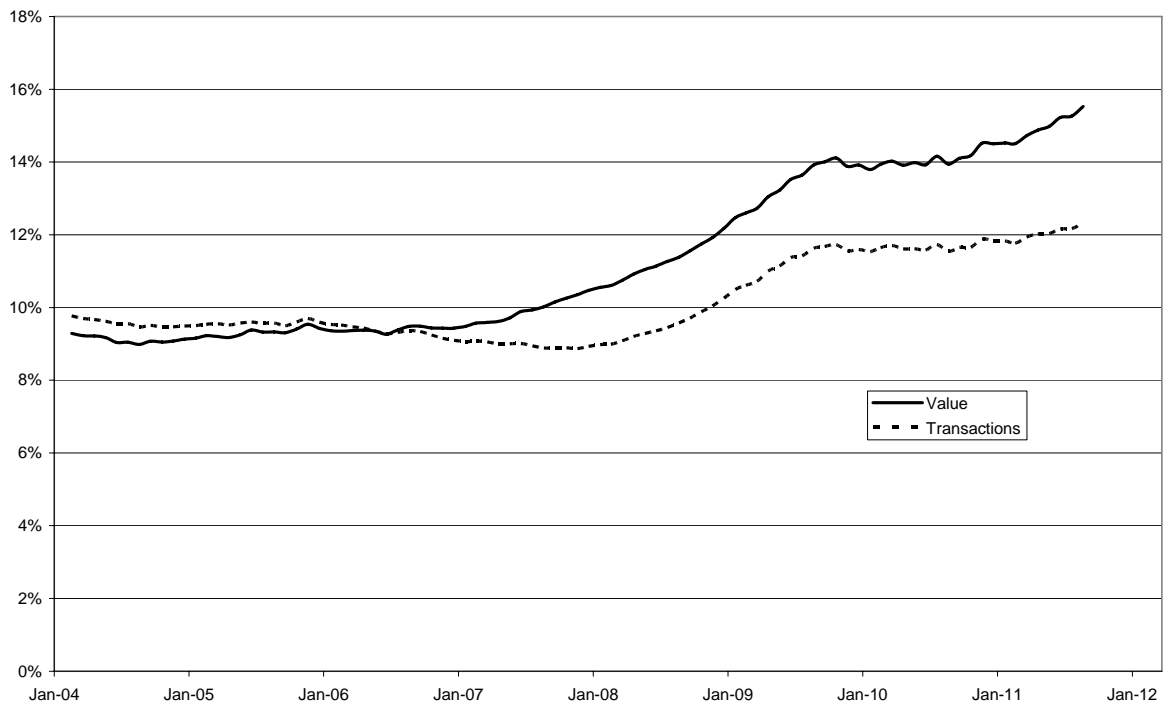
## **12 Housing Market Activity**

- 12.1 This section provides an update on activity within the Aberdeen City and Shire housing market. This combines intelligence on housing market activity from various sources, including data from the Local Authority Housing Bulletin (Registers of Scotland), the Aberdeen Solicitors Property Centre and the National House Building Council.

### **Local Authority Housing Bulletin**

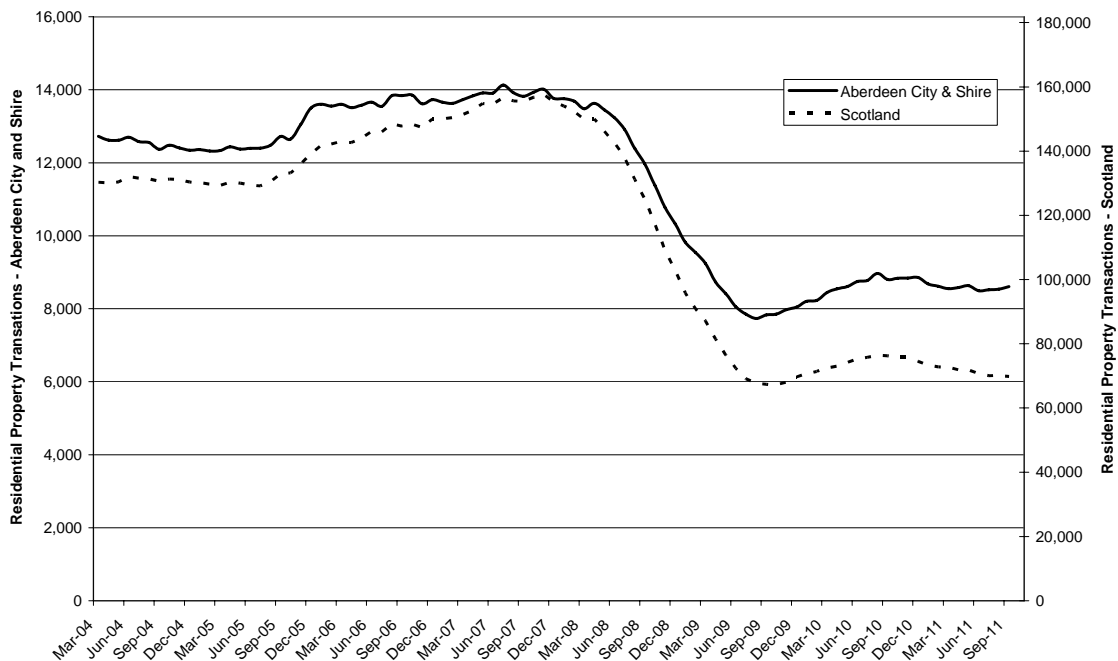
- 12.2 The Local Authority Housing Bulletin collates a range of time-series statistics on the volume of transaction and house prices by council area in Scotland. The bulletin is produced by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA), based on Registers of Scotland data, with the latest edition covering the period to end September 2011.
- 12.3 From Figure 1 it can be seen that up to mid-2007, Aberdeen City and Shire's proportion of the total residential property market in Scotland was quite stable at between 9% and 9.5%. However, from March 2007 onwards this area has seen that percentage increasing up to 14% in October 2009. After a period of stability at that level for a number of months, the upward trend has continued with Aberdeen City and Shire representing 15.5% of Scottish residential property market by value in September 2011. A similar trend is followed in terms of the number of transactions in Aberdeen City and Shire, reaching 12.3% of the Scottish total in September 2011. As a basis for comparison, 8.8% of Scottish households live in Aberdeen City and Shire.

**Figure 1: Aberdeen City and Shire as a percentage of the Scottish residential property market**



12.4 Figure 2 shows that, between 2004 and 2007, residential property transactions slightly increased from an annual rate of around 12,500 to 14,000 in Aberdeen City and Shire. Following the steep falls in 2008 (which were not as significant as elsewhere in Scotland), annual transactions have stabilised and increased slightly to 8,400 in the year to the end of September 2011 (although still 40% below the peak).

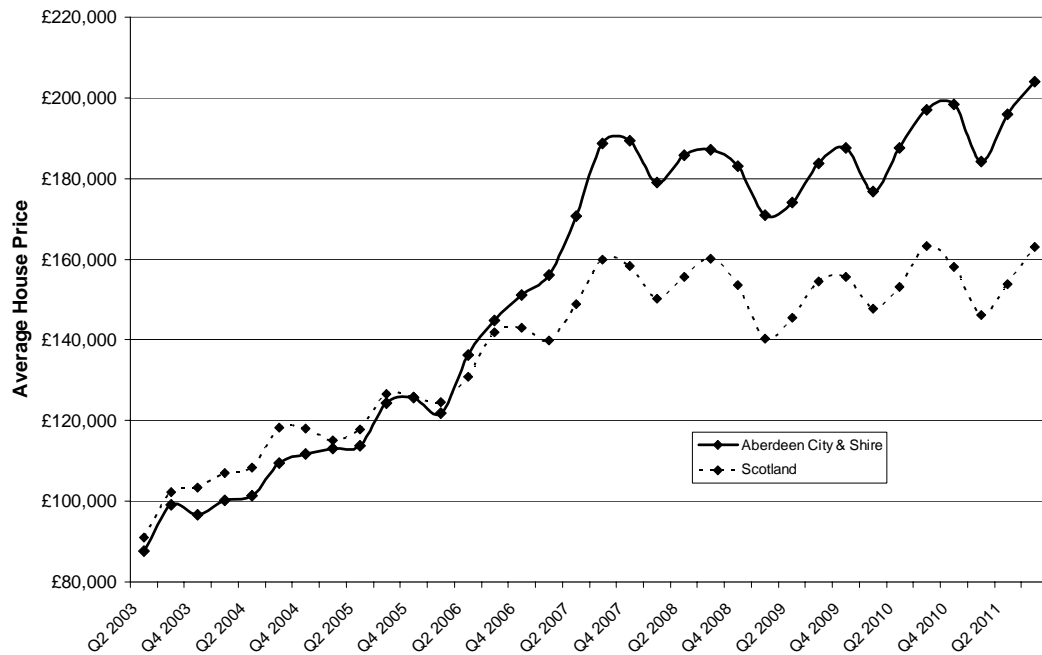
**Figure 2: Residential property transactions (2004 – 2011)**



12.5 Figure 3 displays the average quarterly house price for sales in Aberdeen City and Shire compared to national averages. It shows that the average house

price in Aberdeen City and Shire rose to record levels in late 2010 and once again in Q3 2011 (£204,015), well above the national average of £163,091 (Q3 2011). Average house prices in both Aberdeen City and Shire and Scotland as a whole peaked in July 2008 before bottoming out in March 2009 at 15.5% and 17.9% respectively below their peak values. Average prices in September 2011 were 2.3% above the 2008 peak in Aberdeen City and Shire but 4.2% below peak in Scotland as a whole.

**Figure 3: Average quarterly house price trend (2003 – 2011)**

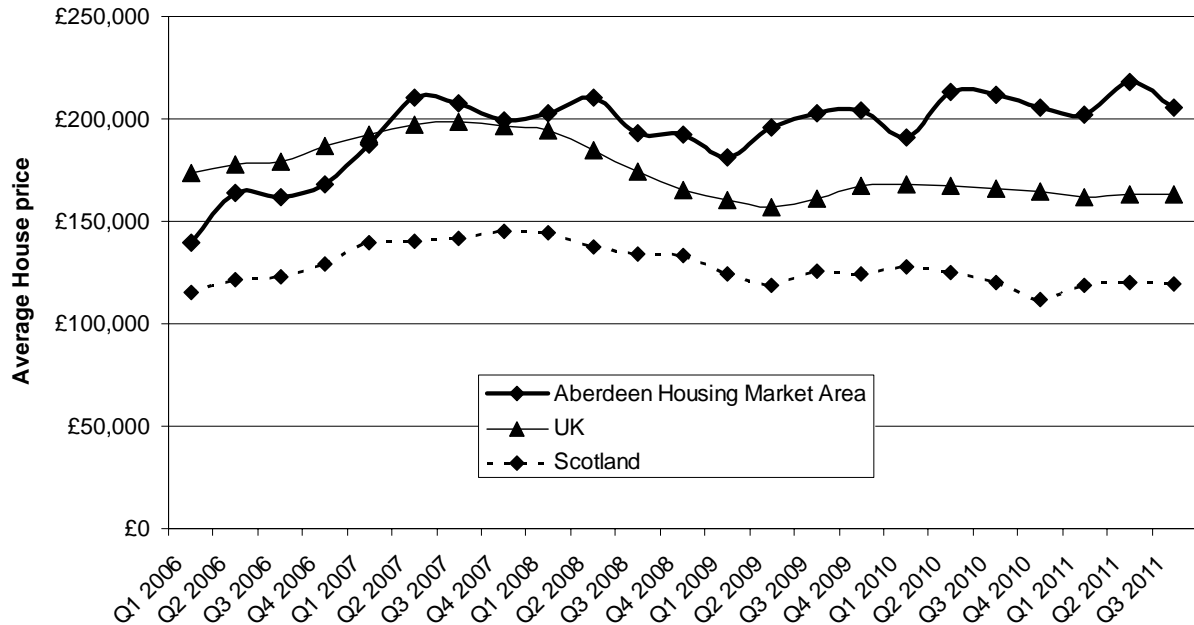


### ASPC Housing Market Bulletin

12.6 An additional source of information is produced by Aberdeen City Council who publish a housing market bulletin providing information based on the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) only. The bulletin is updated quarterly using data supplied by Aberdeen Solicitors' Property Centre. The national house price figures are taken from HBOS.

12.7 Figure 4 shows that within the AHMA the average house price during Q3 2011 was £205,751, slightly down on the previous quarter. However, the AHMA average price remained well above the Scottish and UK averages, evidencing growth since 2009.

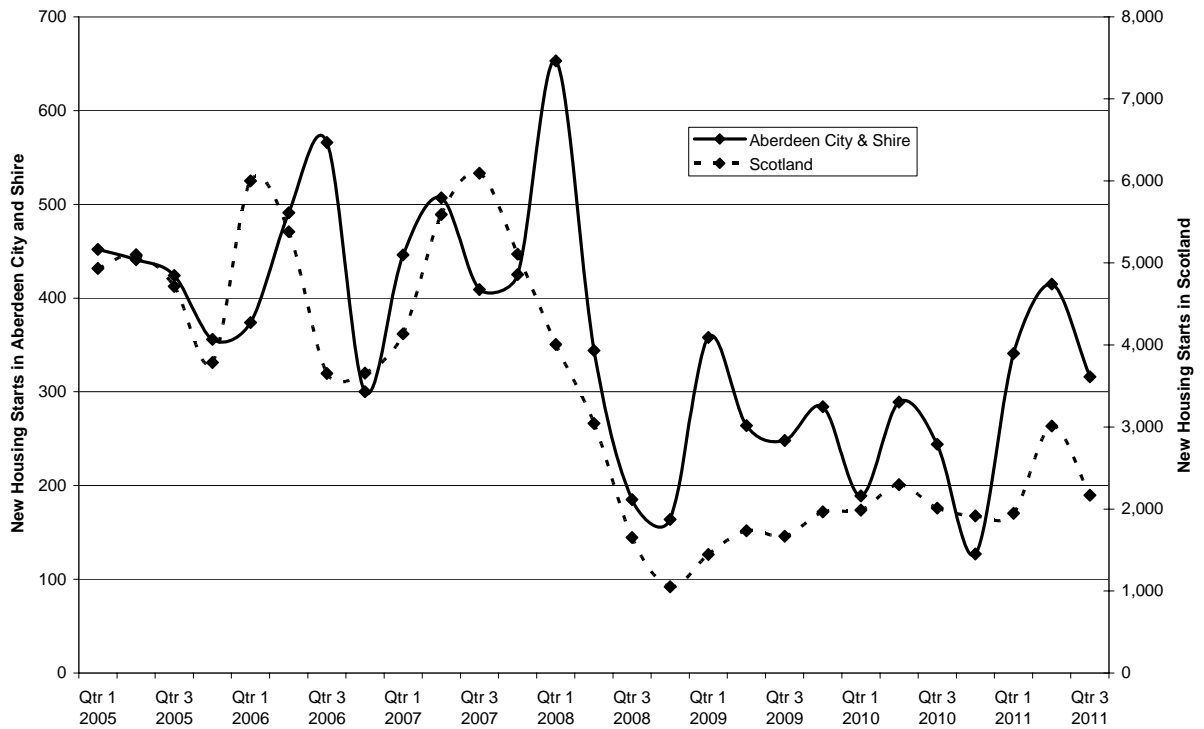
**Figure 4: Average House Price – Aberdeen HMA, Scotland and UK**



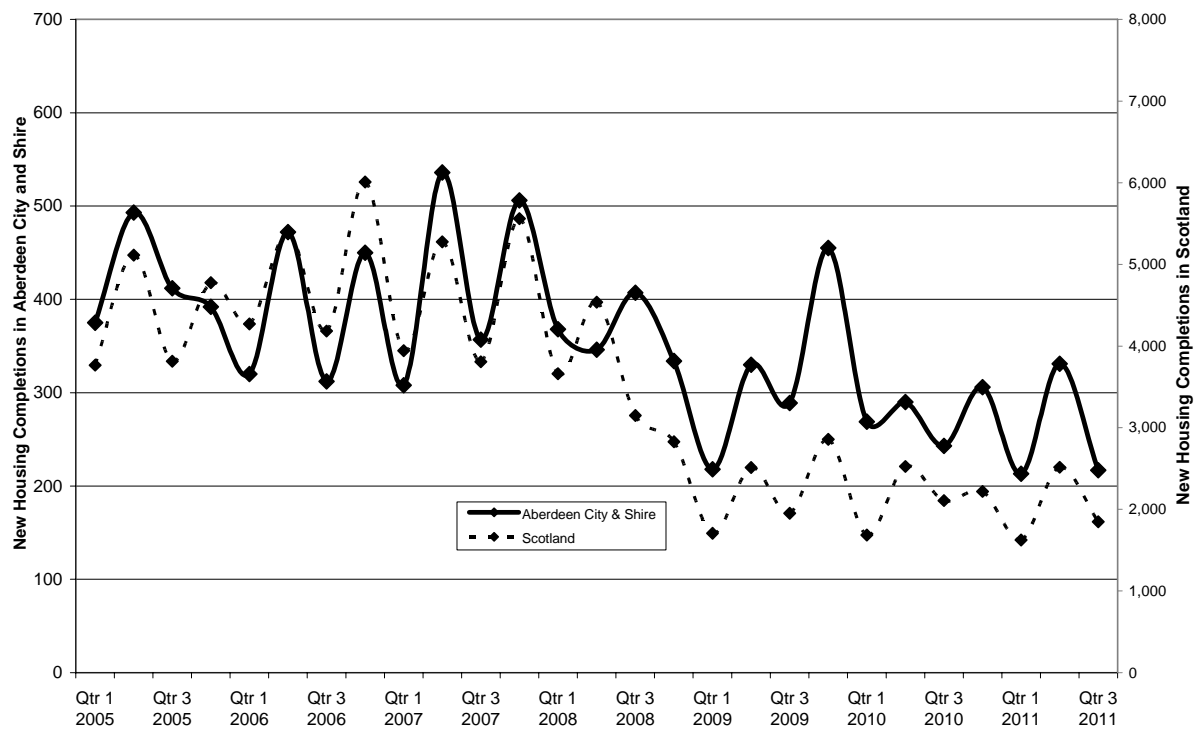
**New house building**

12.8 The National House Building Council (NHBC) produces statistics on UK new house-building derived from its 20,000 registered builders, who construct over 80% of the new homes built in the UK. As such, they represent a source of detailed, up-to-date information on new home construction and the house-building industry. Figures 5 and 6 below compare starts and completions data for Aberdeen City and Shire against Scotland as a whole. It can be seen from Figure 5 that, new starts hit a post-recession peak in Qtr2 2011 before falling back slightly in Qtr3. New starts in Aberdeen City and Shire represented 13.3% of new house starts in Scotland as a whole in the year to September 2011. Completions (Figure 6) also vary from quarter to quarter and appear to reflect the same trend, with Aberdeen City and Shire representing 13% of new house completions in Scotland during the year to September 2011. Aberdeen City and Shire has approximately 8.8% of the population and households in Scotland so it can be seen that, although starts and completions are at a lower level than before the recession, relative performance remains quite good.

**Figure 5: NHBC Housing Starts Data (Qtr1 2005-Qtr3 2011)**



**Figure 6: NHBC Housing Completions Data (Qtr1 2005-Qtr3 2011)**



12.9 Figure 7 below shows the change in annual housing completions for Scotland and Aberdeen City and Shire since 2005. The figures show that both areas continue to see subdued levels of construction activity, although the Aberdeen City and Shire area is out-performing the rest of the country.



**Figure 7: Annualised Housing Completions to Qtr3 2011**



**Key Messages**

12.10 A number of key messages can be drawn from the information presented above:

- a) The residential property market in Aberdeen City and Shire is out-performing the Scottish market, although both are operating at levels well below their long-term average levels;
- b) Aberdeen City and Shire average house prices have been rising over the last two years and are now at a level higher than those seen prior to the recession;
- c) New house completions are significantly down on the long-term average across Scotland but the decline has been less significant in Aberdeen City and Shire.

**13 A study into the recovery of heat from power generation in Scotland**

13.1 The Scottish Government published research in November 2011 which examined the potential for heat recovery from Scotland’s three existing (Peterhead, Longannet and Cogenzie) and one proposed (Hunterston) thermal power stations (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/362183/0122534.pdf>). A catchment area of 30km was identified and potential heat networks mapped out, with a financial model developed to identify the potential costs and benefits involved.

13.2 However, none of the projects was seen to be financially viable, with a significant funding gap identified in each case. Direct financial support from the public sector for these investments would need to be very significant to have

any impact on viability and would be very difficult to justify, due to the source of the heat (fossil power stations) and the State Aid requirements.

## 14 SDPA Website Statistics (October 2010 – September 2011)

14.1 The summary of web statistics for Q4 2010 to Q3 2011 is set out in Figure 10 below. This shows a range of data on visitors and site traffic.

**Figure 10: Website Summary Statistics**

	Q4 2010	Q1 2011	Q2 2011	Q3 2011
<b>Visits</b>	1,966	1,742	1,389	1,425
<b>Unique visitors</b>	1,009	1,024	943	960
<b>% new visitors</b>	43.1	50.2	56.9	56.1
<b>Page views</b>	6,986	6,136	4,709	4,891
<b>Average pages viewed</b>	3.55	3.52	3.39	3.43
<b>Average time spent at site</b>	2:47	2:39	2:55	2:44
<b>Direct / Referral / Search (%)</b>	23/29/48	21/32/47	17/33/50	19/32/49

	Q4 2010 – Q3 2011
<b>Visits</b>	6,522
<b>Unique visitors</b>	3,572
<b>% new visitors</b>	50.8
<b>Page views</b>	22,725
<b>Average pages viewed</b>	3.48
<b>Average time spent at site</b>	2:46
<b>Direct / Referral / Search (%)</b>	20/32/48

14.2 In total, over 6,500 visits to the SDPA website were recorded in the last year, with around 1,000 unique visitors each quarter. However, peaks of activity can be seen when committee papers are published and when e-notifications are sent to registered users.

14.3 The average number of pages viewed (around 3.5) and time spent on the site (2min 45sec approx.) are similar across each quarter, although this excludes time spent viewing PDF documents such as the structure plan itself. Between 17% and 23% of visitors accessed the site using previous bookmarks (or directly typing in the address), 47-50% used a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing, BT-yahoo) and 29-32% were referred via a link from another websites. Top referrals are still from Aberdeen City Council (849) and Aberdeenshire Council (557), although the BBC website (164) and the Scottish Government (71) also referred considerable traffic.

14.4 Of the 3,151 search engine requests which resulted in traffic to the website, 2,875 (91%) were made via 'Google'. Figure 11 below shows the top 10 search terms used in search engines which resulted in a visit to the SDPA website.

### **Figure 11: Top 10 search engine search terms**

<b>Search term</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1. aberdeen city and shire structure plan	338
2. sdpa	191
3. aberdeen structure plan	147
4. aberdeenshire structure plan	139
5. aberdeen city and shire housing need and demand assessment	79
6. aberdeen city and shire	68
7. aberdeen strategic development plan	58
8. strategic development planning authority aberdeen	56
9. aberdeen sdpa	52
10. aberdeen city and shire strategic development plan	50

14.5 In terms of the most viewed pages, three received more than 1,000 page views as set out below. As can be seen in Figure 12, the top 3 pages only account for 37% of the pages viewed. In addition, five news items received more than 100 views each. These related to the publication of both council's proposed local development plans, the SDPA's development plan scheme in 2010 and 2011 and the delay to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

### **Figure 12: Most visited web pages**

<b>Pages</b>	<b>Pageviews</b>	<b>% Pageviews</b>
Home	5,797	25.5%
Home / Publications	1,400	6.2%
Home / Development Plan	1,263	5.6%

## **Appendix 1: Extracts from the National Planning Framework 2 – Action Programme Progress Report (June 2011)**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/212607/0122116.pdf>

### **National Developments (Aberdeen City and Shire)**

#### 6. Strategic Airport Enhancements: Aberdeen Airport

Work started in March 2011 on a £10 million 124 metre extension of Aberdeen Airport's main runway, which is scheduled for completion by May 2012. Research published in 2010, commissioned by Aberdeen Airport and supported by ACSEF (Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future), confirms that the airport currently supports around 3,390 jobs and £114 million GVA annually in Aberdeen City and Shire, and £126 million GVA Scotland-wide. This report forms a key part of the new Master Plan which is currently being drafted. The Aberdeen Local Development Plan Proposed Plan (Sept 2010) presumes in favour of associated uses on the operational land at Aberdeen Airport and its accompanying Action Programme identifies the lead agency and actions and milestones required to deliver the policy.

#### 13. New Non-nuclear Baseload Capacity at Other Existing Power Station Sites

Scottish Ministers granted consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act for a Life Extension Project Generating Station at Longannet and revision to the Ash Disposal Strategy at Valleyfield and Longannet Ash Lagoons in March 2010. The scheme comprises Selective Catalytic Reduction and revision of the strategy for ash deposition in order to extend the lifespan of the station to 2030. The main construction period will be 2012-15. A further section 36 application to construct and operate Carbon Capture/Steam and Power plant is expected to be submitted to Scottish Ministers in 2011. This proposal is now the only remaining contender in Round 1 of the UK competition for CCS demonstration funding.

In December 2009, Scottish Power applied for consent to demolish the existing coal-fired station at Cockenzie and construct and operate a new gas-fired Combined Cycle Gas Turbine generating station on the site. Nominal capacity for the proposed generating station is 1000MW. The Public Local Inquiry Report was recently received and Ministers are considering this alongside all consultation responses received. A decision is hoped to be made in Summer 2011. A separate application for the gas pipeline has been submitted to Ministers and this is also hoped to be determined in Summer 2011.

Upgrading of Peterhead Power Station is a proposal in the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan and will be taken forward in the emerging Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report September 2011. Discussion with Scottish & Southern Energy on proposals and the timetable for the upgrade are ongoing, including the potential for the site to be a test ground for carbon capture and storage. There are currently no plans for the provision of new baseload capacity at Boddam Power Station.

#### 17. Electricity Grid Reinforcements: Upgrade East Coast Transmission Line

Development work continues on upgrading the infrastructure on the east coast route between Blackhillock in Moray to Kincardine to allow the existing infrastructure to be operated at 400kV. Estimated completion in 2015/16. In addition, SHETL and NGET are jointly developing the design for an HVDC link between Peterhead and the North of England.

## **Spatial Perspectives (East Coast)**

- Strengthen East Coast corridor connectivity and collaboration – A key element of the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2010-2021 is to work with the rail industry, Transport Scotland and others to promote and support measures to cut journey times, including addressing pinch points in Angus and Fife and at Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street Stations. Some of this is addressed in the Strategic Projects Review and some improvements made to journey times to Edinburgh have already been delivered. The Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA and Nestrans have responded to the TAYPlan MIR in relation to interventions on the road and rail network in their area which impact on Aberdeen City & Shire and further discussions in advance of publication of the proposed plan. Issues relating to improved access on the east coast corridor, including improved transport around Dundee and improved rail corridor are included in STPR. After a Nestrans campaign, the UK Government announced new trains for the East Coast mainline, which will secure continued through-running between Aberdeen and London in the long term.
- Nestrans and partners have met with the relevant officers with Transport Scotland on a number of occasions to offer to help advance the STPR projects within the north east. In particular, the strategic Park & Ride sites are being taken forward with planning permission secured for the A96 site and design being progressed for the A90 (south) site, including pre-application consultations. These are to be considered for inclusion in the contract to construct the AWPR and A90 Balmedie to Tippetty projects to secure efficiencies. In 2010, Transport Scotland commissioned Network Rail to undertake a major study into the Aberdeen-Inverness railway line. This has now been published, confirming that a two-hour journey time with hourly frequency is feasible, including a new station at Kintore and additional passing loops. The study also confirmed that improvements to Inveramsay Bridge would not impact on the line and this project has now been passed to trunk roads division to progress – they have appointed consultants to develop a preferred option for removing the restriction at this location. Again, Nestrans has offered any support required to progress these issues. Nestrans Board had agreed a Rail Action Plan for the north east, identifying medium and long-term priorities for developing rail services within and to/from the north east. Long term electrification of the network to the north east (and possibly between Aberdeen and Inverness) are included as aspirations in that document. The Scottish Government has indicated an aspiration to electrify the primary rail network in Scotland.
- Grow and diversify the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire economy – April 2011 saw the commencement of work on the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report. Proposed Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Local Development Plans submitted for examination in March and April 2011 respectively.
- Strengthen Aberdeen City and Shire's role as Scotland's northern gateway – The Aberdeen City & Shire Structure Plan was approved in August 2009. Proposed Local Development Plans (LDPs) for Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City were submitted to the Scottish Government Directorate of Planning and Appeals for Examination in March and May 2011 respectively. Development Plans in the north east reflect the 'Energetica' initiative which is encouraging economic development



in the Aberdeen to Peterhead strategic growth area and is one of Scottish Enterprise's key infrastructure projects. A delivery plan has been produced to provide the context for public and private sector investment in phase one, up to and including 2013. Nestrans continues to work with port and airport operators to promote the opportunities for direct links to and from the region. In particular, Aberdeen Airport is actively promoting opportunities for further direct flight links to key destinations in the UK, Scandinavia and continental Europe. It is proposed to refresh the Regional Transport Strategy in parallel with the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan (Main Issues Report expected September 2011) to better link timeframes and ensure compatibility in policy terms. Nestrans, the SDPA and both councils commissioned work on the cumulative impacts of new development and are producing supplementary guidance to deliver a package of interventions to facilitate development proposals in the local development plans. Transport Scotland are also involved in discussions and the guidance will be consulted on in September 2011, subject to approval by the SDPA. In May 2011, Aberdeen Harbour Board announced the start of major works to widen and deepen the navigable channel into Aberdeen Harbour to ensure reliability and improve access particularly during bad weather and heavy swells. Nestrans and other regional transport partnerships are campaigning to secure commitment for landing slots to be retained at London airports.

- Regeneration and renewal in Dundee – the 15 year programme of regeneration at Dundee Waterfront aims to reconnect the city centre with the river. Initial road realignment, tunnel strengthening and development of a storm water tank have been completed. The next stage, involving the realignment of ramps to the Tay Road Bridge and construction of a northern boulevard, commenced in May 2010. Regeneration is being taken forward across the city, particularly focused on Whitfield, Hilltown and Lochee, with significant input from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and the Town Centre Regeneration Fund. A Draft Delivery Plan for 2011/12 Vacant and Derelict Land Funding has been received from Dundee City Council, proposing the construction of pound lock gates at Camperdown Docks to increase the operational capacity of the harbour and enable the construction of a marina to contribute to the wider Waterfront regeneration.
- Develop the potential of the Dundee-Perth-Stirling strategic transport corridor – the Tayplan Proposed Plan was issued for consultation in June 2011 and points to the Dundee-Perth-Stirling route as a key regional movement corridor. STPR proposals are reflected in the proposed Strategic Development Plan and draft Action Programme which identify a number of transport proposals intended to improve connectivity along the corridor.
- Promote Fife as a key location for business and tourism activity – the Fife Economic Strategy commits to making Fife the easiest place to do business and a centre of excellence for renewable energy, manufacturing, research and services. An associated action plan has been approved by the Fife Economy Partnership. The Fife Tourism Strategy 2010 to 2020 was published in April 2010. The Fife Tourism Partnership Board is now working on the Tourism Action Plan.

## Appendix 2: A96 Inveramsay Bridge Improvement Options

