

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

Date: 15 December 2011

Title: Supplementary Planning Guidance – Delivering identified projects through a Strategic Transport Fund

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) for supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on a strategic transport fund following consultation earlier this year.

2. Background

2.1 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in August 2009. At that time Ministers commented that the structure plan provided a suitable framework for the local development plans (LDPs) being prepared by both councils, but that further transport appraisal work would be necessary to gauge the impact of the LDPs.

2.2 The structure plan spatial strategy was predicated partly on transport corridors and the ability to provide more sustainable transport choices. However, it was clear on the need for investment from the public and private sector in new infrastructure to support growth (para. 3.8) and on the need for extra contributions where wider effects of development are felt (para. 5.8).

2.3 As the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire LDPs progressed towards the Proposed Plan stage, the SDPA and Nestrans, along with the two councils and Transport Scotland commissioned a cumulative transport assessment (CTA) of the sites identified in both LDPs up to 2023.

2.4 A key output from the CTA was the identification of areas where some form of intervention will be required to alleviate the congestion as a result of the cumulative impact of new development. These interventions will be required over and above the wide range of schemes committed to be delivered by the public sector in the coming years.

2.5 Given the public sector list of schemes to be funded, at this time projects in these newly identified hotspots can only be delivered through contributions from the development process.

2.6 The SPG was prepared with by the SDPA working with Nestrans, Transport Scotland and the planning, transportation and planning gain services of the two councils. A pre-consultation draft was circulated to a range of stakeholders earlier in 2011 and amendments made in light of the comments received. Draft SPG was agreed for consultation at the September 2011 meeting of the SDPA, with consultation taking place between 7 October and 18 November 2011.

3. Consultation Process

- 3.1 A public notice was published in the Press and Journal on 7 October 2011 and 11 weekly papers in Aberdeenshire during the following week.
- 3.2 Letters were sent to over 280 individuals and organisations from the SDPA's consultation database (as well as all Councillors and MPs / MSPs) on 7 October 2011 including a copy of the press notice published that morning. An email was also sent to 243 individuals and organisations which had expressed a preference for electronic communication. Copies of the draft guidance itself were also made available at all public libraries and planning offices in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.
- 3.3 The draft SPG and other relevant material was made available on the SDPA website throughout the consultation period and over 100 unique visitors have accessed these pages during this period.
- 3.4 During the consultation period, officers attended one meeting of the Grampian House Builders Committee of Homes for Scotland where the supplementary planning guidance was discussed. In addition, a number of
- 3.5 A total of 20 responses were submitted to the consultation by the closing date of 18 November 2011 with one additional late response.

4. Responses to the draft guidance

- 4.1 Although 21 responses is low, the issues raised in the consultation (a financial mechanism to pay for infrastructure provision) are of such a nature that a large and wide-ranging response was not anticipated. The specialist nature of the SPG was highlighted in the September 2011 report.
- 4.2 As can be seen from figure 1 below, most responses came from development interests, although responses were also received from three Community Councils and one voluntary organisation (see Appendix 1). This profile of respondents is as would be expected in a consultation of this nature.

Figure 1: Classification of respondent

| | Responses |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Agents for developers | 12 |
| Community Councils | 3 |
| Scottish Government / Key Agencies | 2 |
| Developers | 2 |
| Development organisations | 1 |
| Voluntary sector | 1 |
| Individuals | 0 |
| TOTAL | 21 |

- 4.3 The comments received have been categorised and summarised and these can be found in Appendix 2 which also includes a proposed response to them and proposals for how the draft guidance could be amended.

- 4.4 A variety of responses were received to the consultation. Around half of responses were broadly supportive of the draft guidance (some of which included concerns over some aspects of the detail), while around half opposed the guidance in principle as well as aspects of the detail. Both groups included Community Councils and development interests and there was no obvious polarisation of responses between the various interest groups.
- 4.5 Those generally supportive of the guidance recognised the need to address the cumulative impacts of development and saw the proposal as a reasonable way of supporting the scale of growth anticipated over the period to 2023 and beyond. In particular, it was welcomed that focus was being given to the practical matters associated with the delivery of development in a challenging economic climate.
- 4.6 Those opposed to the principle were generally of the opinion that either the public sector should pay for the required interventions, that there was insufficient evidence that there was a need for the interventions, or that existing mechanisms should be used. However, with one exception no suggestions were made as to how to improve the current system or how to identify an additional £86m capital funding from the public sector. The exception to this was a suggestion from Mastrick, Sheddocksley & Summerhill Community Council to use a development corridor approach as the basis for identifying cumulative impacts and their mitigation).
- 4.7 A range of detailed comments were made and some of these have resulted in proposed changes to the guidance.

5. Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 5.1 A strategic environmental assessment pre-screening report was submitted to the consultation authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency) on 7 October 2011. This report concluded that the SPG would have no or minimal effects on the environment and, as a consequence, a full assessment was not required. Any comments from the Consultation Authorities would normally be provided within 10 working days but no response was received and it can be concluded that no concerns have been raised with that conclusion.

6. Proposed amendments to the draft SPG

- 6.1 It is proposed that the SPG be taken forward to adoption but that a number of amendments are made to it in response to consultation. Appendix 3 contains the revised supplementary guidance, amended in line with Appendix 2.
- 6.2 Exposing the draft guidance to consultation highlighted a number of aspects of the guidance which were either open to interpretation or were misleading and the opportunity has been taken to improve the text in these areas. The opportunity has also been taken to suggest changes which clarify the process to be used to prioritise projects within the framework set by the guidance.

6.3 These amendments are of a relatively minor nature but do serve to clarify and improve the text of the document. As a consequence, the consultation has served to improve the draft guidance and a letter will be sent to all who responded thanking them for their engagement in this piece of work.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Both councils have previously agreed the principle of the SPG in early 2011. It is proposed that upon agreement from the SDPA, the SPG be ratified by both Councils in January / February 2012 but applied with immediate effect. This will ensure that opportunities are not missed as sites start to come forward for development where a contribution will be required.

7.2 This report will be referred to the Nestrans Board with a draft minute of the meeting so that progress can be made with establishing the fund and the associated work to implement it.

7.3 A final copy of the SPG will be prepared and made available on the SDPA website.

7.4 During the consultation period, Transport Scotland highlighted the SPG (and the cumulative assessment upon which it is based) to the other Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland as good practice from which others could learn. As a consequence, it is proposed that officers will investigate the possibility of proposing it within the Scottish Government's online resource of good practice case studies.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the SDPA:

- a) note the responses to the draft supplementary planning guidance found in Appendix 2;
- b) agree the amended supplementary planning guidance as set out in Appendix 3; and
- c) refer this report to the two councils for ratification and to the Nestrans Board for information.

David Jennings
Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Manager

Dr Margaret Bochel
Head of Planning & Sustainable Development
Aberdeen City Council

Robert Gray
Head of Planning & Building Standards
Aberdeenshire Council



Appendix 1: Respondents

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

ANM Group Ltd (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Catterline Kinneff and Dunnottar Community Council

CHAP Homes Ltd (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Deveron Homes Ltd / Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Drum Kingswells Business Park Ltd (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Elsick Development Company Ltd (by Paull & Williamsons)

Grandhome Trust (by Paull & Williamsons)

Harper & Cochrane Ltd (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Homes for Scotland

Hutcheon N. (by RBCTP)

Kirkwood Homes Ltd

Mastrick, Sheddocksley & Summerhill Community Council

McDonald H. (by Halliday Fraser Munro)

Newtonhill, Muchalls and Cammachmore Community Council

Scotia Homes Ltd (by Emac Planning)

Scottish Enterprise

Scottish Government

Stewart Milne Homes

Tawse C. (by Paull & Williamsons)

Union Square Developments Ltd (by Muir Smith Evans)