ABERDEEN CITY AND SHIRE | Strategic Development Planning Authority

Draft

Annual Report 2011/12

1. **Foreword**

2. **Introduction**

3. **Governance of the SDPA**

4. **Strategic Development Plan Team**

5. **Review of the Year**
   a. Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan
   b. Development Plan Scheme
   c. Strategic Development Plan
   d. Supplementary planning Guidance
   e. SDPA Website
   f. Raising our profile
   g. Consultation Responses

6. **Funding and Expenditure**

7. **Monitoring Framework and Performance Indicators**

8. **The Year Ahead**

1.   Foreword

I have great pleasure in introducing the fourth annual report of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA).

The year was marked by key successes as well as continued frustrations.

Early preparatory work for the first strategic development plan during 2010/11 gave way to the publication of a Main Issues Report for consultation in October 2011. A wide range of responses were received which will be invaluable as we take forward a proposed plan later this year. Implementation of the current structure plan also made significant strides over recent months as both councils adopted their respective local development plans. The key challenge ahead for the two councils, the development industry and partners will be to turn these allocations into the high quality sustainable mixed communities required by the plan.

Frustrations have focused on the repeated legal challenges in the courts to the delivery of key infrastructure. Against a backdrop of decline or stagnation elsewhere, Aberdeen City and Shire is growing and we need the infrastructure to facilitate this. It is hoped that the year ahead will see legal challenge give way to the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and associated infrastructure which is critical to the area's future.

Finally, the elections in May 2012 brought an end to the involvement of a number of Members in the SDPA and my tenure as chair comes to an end in September 2012. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members for the contribution they have made over the years and also to thank David Jennings and his team for the excellent work they have done to advance strategic planning in the north east.

I trust that 2012/13 will be a year when we can make even more progress to achieve our shared aspirations for the future … "an excellent place to live, visit and do business".

I trust that you find this report of interest and commend it to you.

Councillor Peter Argyle
Chair, Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority

2. Introduction

This is the fourth annual report of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA). This report covers the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012. The SDPA's accounts for 2011/12 will be published separately and made available on the SDPA's website later in the year.

This annual report provides the opportunity to both review the achievements of the past year and look forward to the year ahead, following a similar structure to the previous annual report.

Section 3 provides a background to and governance of the SDPA, while section 4 covers the SDP Team. Section 5 provides a review of the year, with a look forward to the year ahead contained in section 6. The funding and expenditure of the SDPA are addressed in section 7, with the monitoring framework contained in section 8.

3. Governance of the SDPA

Background

The principal purpose for the establishment of SDPAs in 2008 was to provide a vital forum for planning authorities to jointly establish a common approach to matters that extend beyond an individual authority's boundaries. In particular, the SDPA has a duty to prepare and keep under review a strategic development plan (SDP).

Governance

A minute of agreement between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and a set of standing orders currently govern the operation of the SDPA. These documents were agreed by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in 2008, being amended in 2010. Appendix 1 sets out the aims and objectives of the SDPA.

The Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA consists of 12 members, with six being appointed by each council. The Chair and Vice-Chair are from different Councils and they hold office for a period of two years.

Meetings of the SDPA take place in public at least four times a year and more regularly when required. Meetings are held on an alternating basis at the Town House (Aberdeen City) and Woodhill House (Aberdeenshire) in Aberdeen and the administration and responsibility for clerking the meetings rotates accordingly.

Membership

The membership of the SDPA changed during 2011/12, with Cllr Corall replacing Cllr McCaig half way through the year. Cllr Hunter moved from being a Labour member to Independent by the time of the March 2012 meeting. Membership at the end of the year is set out in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Members of the SDPA (as at 31 March 2012)

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
Councillor Marie Boulton (Ind)	Councillor Peter Argyle (Lib Dem)
Councillor John Corall (SNP)	Councillor John Cox (Ind)
Councillor Bill Cormie (SNP)	Councillor Rob Merson (SNP)
Councillor Kate Dean (Lib Dem)	Councillor Stuart Pratt (SNP)
Councillor James Hunter (Ind)	Councillor Mike Sullivan (Lib Dem)
Councillor John Stewart (Lib Dem)	Councillor Jill Webster (Conservative)

In addition to the twelve members of the Authority there are also twelve named substitute members. There was no change during the year and substitute members are set out in figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Substitute Members of the SDPA (as at 31 March 2012)

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL	ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL
Councillor Alan Donnelly (Conservative)	Councillor Graeme Clark (SNP)
Councillor Neil Fletcher (Lib Dem)	Councillor Bill Howatson (Lib Dem)
Councillor George Penny (Lib Dem)	Councillor Albert Howie (Ind)
Councillor Muriel Jaffrey (SNP)	Councillor Ron McKail (Conservative)
Councillor John West (SNP)	Councillor Fiona McRae (SNP)
Councillor Willie Young (Labour)	Councillor Alastair Ross (Lib Dem)

Attendance at the meetings of the SDPA is set out in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Member attendance at meetings of the SDPA in 2011/12

MEMBERS	10 June 2011	23 September 2011	15 December 2011	9 March 2012	Total
Councillor Peter Argyle (Chair)	✗	✓	✓	✓	3
Councillor Marie Boulton	✗	✓	✓	✗	2
Councillor Corall	■	■	✗	✗	0
Councillor Bill Cormie	✓	✓	✓	✗	3
Councillor John Cox	✓	✗	✗	✓	2
Councillor Kate Dean (Vice Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✗	3
Councillor James Hunter	✗	✗	✗	✗	0
Councillor Callum McCaig	✗	✗	■	■	0
Councillor Rob Merson	✗	✓	✓	✗	2
Councillor Stuart Pratt	✗	✗	✗	✗	0
Councillor John Stewart	✗	✓	✗	✗	1
Councillor Mike Sullivan	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Councillor Jill Webster	✗	✓	✓	✗	2
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS					
Councillor Graeme Clark	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
Councillor Alan Donnelly					
Councillor Neil Fletcher					
Councillor Bill Howatson					
Councillor Albert Howie				✓	1
Councillor Muriel Jaffrey		✓		✓	2
Councillor Ron McKail					
Councillor Fiona McRae			✓		1
Councillor George Penny	✓			✓	2
Councillor Alastair Ross	✓			✓	2
Councillor John West					
Councillor Willie Young					
Total	**7**	**10**	**9**	**8**	

Note: Substitute Members are only entitled to attend meetings of the SDPA when substantive members are unable to attend.

All meetings of the SDPA were attended by between 7 and 10 Members in 2011/12, with an average attendance rate for full members of 44%. Half of the 12 substitute Members attended at least one of the meetings.

4.   Strategic Development Plan Team

The Strategic Development Plan Team moved office accommodation during the year although stayed within the same building. The team now share office space with Nestrans and ACSEF – reducing costs for all three organisations and also facilitating closer working relationships.

Due to tight financial settlements being experienced by the two councils it was not possible to replace the two planner posts but it is hoped that the Senior Planner vacancy created by a secondment will be able to be filled on a temporary basis early in 2012/13. However, both councils did provide additional staff resource to keep the work of the SDPA moving forward.

Figure 4: Strategic Development Plan Team

Position	
Strategic Development Plan Manager	David Jennings
Senior Planner	Bruce Strachan (on secondment with Aberdeenshire Council from 7 October 2011)
Planner	Post Vacant
Planner	Post Vacant

The team are located in offices at Archibald Simpson House, 27 – 29 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5AA

5.   Review of the year

Although primarily established to prepare and keep under review a strategic development plan for the area, the SDPA was initially tasked with continuing the preparation and implementation of a structure plan.

A) Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan

The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Minister on 14 August 2009, an Action Programme was published in December 2009 and a Baseline Monitoring Report in March 2010. Actions in 2011/12 focused on the implementation of the plan through the Action Programme as well as the preparation of a Monitoring Statement alongside the Main Issues Report (see below).

Progress was made against many of the actions during the year, although a number were more challenging, particularly those related to the delivery of critical transport infrastructure including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Adoption of the two local development plans in late 2011/12 and early 2012/13 were critical points in the implementation of the plan.
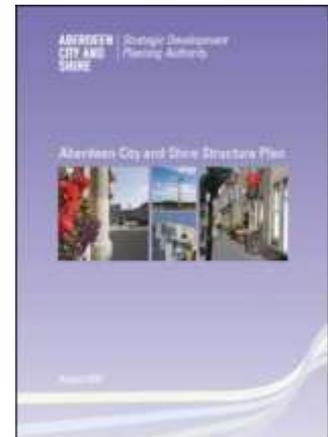
B) Development Plan Scheme

The development plan scheme sets out the authority's programme for preparing and reviewing its strategic development plan and what is likely to be involved at each stage.

The SDPA's fourth statutory development plan scheme was agreed by the SDPA on 9 March 2012 and subsequently submitted to Scottish Ministers and published.

The development plan scheme continues to have a 'Crystal Mark' from the Plain English Campaign, a recognition of the efforts made to present information in a clear way for all members of the community.

C) Strategic Development Plan

Work on the strategic development plan was the main focus of work during the year. The Main Issues Report (MIR) was published for consultation in October with a closing date of 6 January 2012. The MIR had a 'Crystal Mark' and was available in audio format from the SDPA website. Alongside the MIR a range of supporting information and assessments were also published:

- Monitoring Statement
- Structure Plan Risk Assessment

- Housing Need and Demand Assessment
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Climate Change Study
- Transport Background Paper
- Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment – Interim Environmental Report
- Habitats Regulations Assessment

A number of consultation events, meetings and presentations took place in advance of, and during, the consultation period to help inform responses.

A total of 85 responses were received to the consultation from a range of individuals and organisations, with more detail available in the Consultation Report published in March 2012 - available from the SDPA website.

D) Supplementary planning guidance

Building on the work done in previous years on the cumulative transport impact of the new development coming forward through the structure and local development plans, work progressed on a mechanism to address these impacts. Significant engagement and consultation took place with key stakeholders at an early stage as well as on a 'pre-consultation draft' of the supplementary planning guidance. Consultation took place on draft guidance in parallel with the Main Issues Report in October / November 2011 and the results of this were reported to the SDPA in December 2011. Revised guidance was approved at the December meeting and this was subsequently ratified by the two councils in early 2012. The Scottish Government took a close interest in the emerging guidance as one mechanism to aid the delivery of development and mitigate its wider transport impacts. Close working relationships between the SDPA, Nestrans, the two local authorities and Transport Scotland were critical to this project's success and these are now rolling forward into the implementation phase.

E) SDPA website

The website continues to be an invaluable source of information on the work of the SDPA. The site is regularly updated to make it an invaluable communication tool with stakeholders and the public.

Since the introduction of new website monitoring software at the start of October 2009, data has been included in the SDPA Bulletin on a 6 monthly basis. During 2011/12 the site has attracted 4,168 unique visitors and a total of 24,735 page views.

The number of people registered on the website stood at 157 in March 2012. Registered users received 9 e-updates during the year.

F) Raising our profile

The activities to raise the profile of the SDPA during the year have been many and varied, including speaking to stakeholder groups on a range of strategic planning issues. Some of these are outlined below.

The SDP Manager spoke at a number of conferences and training sessions throughout the year, including a Royal Society of Edinburgh event on the Climate Change and the Scottish Land Use Strategy, an SNH internal training session and an ESPON (European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion) event in Edinburgh. A presentation was also made to a group of Norwegian planners visiting Aberdeen.

The SDPA made three press releases during 2011/12, two in relation to the publication of the Main Issues Report and one on the judgement of the inner house of the Court of Session action relating to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

The SDPA is represented on the Scottish Government's Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) Programme Monitoring Board, set up to raise awareness, identify and resolve issues, and assist the progression of timely consenting decisions for CCS projects. The Board met on two occasions during 2011/12. In the early part of the year the team coordinated work with five other planning authorities and independent legal advisers around the planning status of CCS infrastructure requirements.

The team worked with the other three SDPAs and Architecture and Design Scotland to turn a pervious collaboration (the publication of an innovative graphic leaflet called "The Big Picture") into an online animation to make it even more accessible – helping communities engage with strategic planning issues.
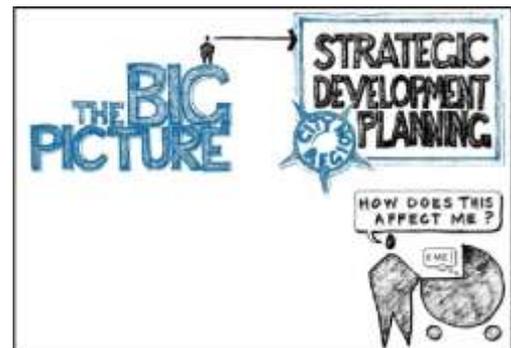
Submissions were made during the year for two projects for the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning and one for the Scottish Transport Awards. In each case these submissions were made in partnership - either with the other three SDPAs (and Architecture and Design Scotland) or Nestrans and the two local authorities.

G) Consultation Responses

Formal responses were made to five consultations during the year, including to two neighbouring authorities. A response was made to the TAYplan Proposed SDP and Proposed Action Programme as well as the Cairngorms National Park Authority Draft Park Plan and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report. A response was also made to the Scottish Government to their Pre-Consultation Draft National Marine Plan.

6.   Funding and Expenditure

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils jointly fund the SDPA on a 50:50 basis. In 2011/12, this amounted to a total contribution of £117,000, with £58,500 coming from each Council.

The SDPA's accounts are audited on an annual basis. Draft accounts for 2011/12 have been submitted and it is anticipated that these will be approved and published on the SDPA website later in 2012. However, figure 5 shows a provisional breakdown of costs for 2011/12.

Figure 5: SDPA Expenditure in 2011/12
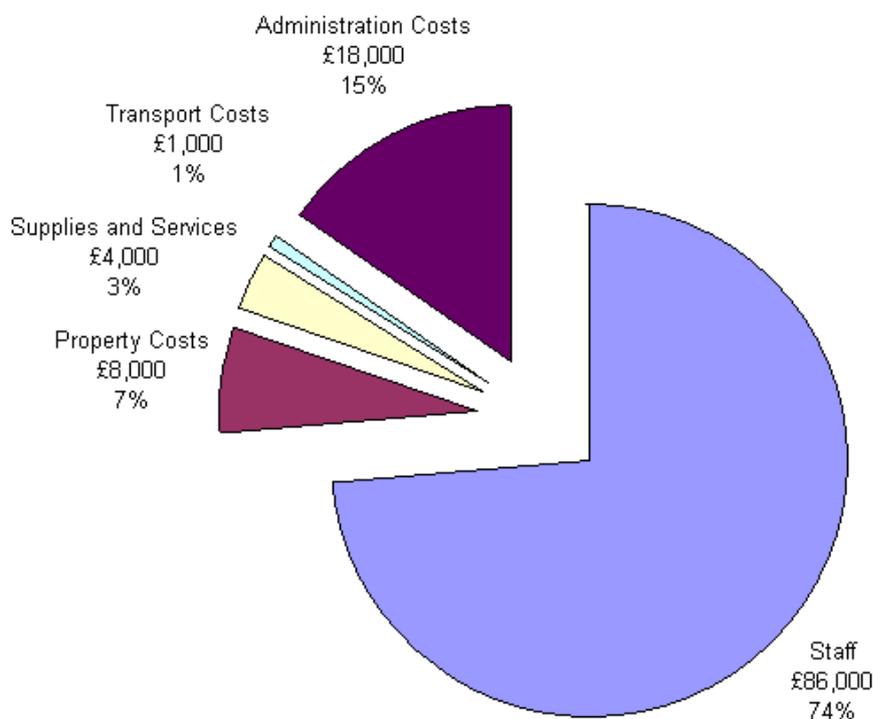
7.   Monitoring framework and performance indicators

It is important that monitoring takes place in relation to outcomes, outputs and impacts. In light of this, there are three elements to the SDPA's monitoring activity.

The structure plan

The structure plan established a monitoring framework against which the performance of the plan can be measured. A baseline monitoring report was prepared in early 2010 and will form the benchmark for future monitoring activity. This work was supplemented by a Monitoring Statement published alongside the Main Issues Report in October 2011.

The action programme and development plan scheme

The structure plan action programme was agreed by the SDPA in December 2009 and has been monitored and updated at regular intervals since. The action programme monitoring incorporates the SDPA actions arising from National Planning Framework 2. Monitoring will also take place against the development plan scheme in terms of progress with the strategic development plan.

Performance indicators

A set of performance indicators were established and agreed by the SDPA during 2009/10 and are presented in Appendix 2. These focus on the outputs of the SDPA and also cover its performance against commitments to transparency, accountability, Plain English, equalities and human rights and environmental responsibility found in the development plan scheme.

8. The year ahead

The focus of work during 2012/13 will be the preparation of a proposed strategic development plan, along with the continued implementation of the structure plan.

Strategic Development Plan
The primary focus of the work of the SDPA during 2012/13 will be the preparation of, and consultation on, a Proposed Strategic Development and Proposed Action Programme. This will be followed by an analysis of responses before submission for examination in early 2013/14.

Structure Plan Action Programme
The SDPA will continue to work with partners to deliver the structure plan, monitoring progress on these every six months.

Supplementary Guidance
Supplementary Guidance will be progressed during the year via a review of the 'Strategic Transport Fund' supplementary planning guidance to give it statutory status alongside the strategic development plan.

SDPA Liaison
The Strategic Development Plan Managers for the four SDPAs (along with the Scottish Government) will continue to meet on a quarterly basis. Joint projects will be carried out around graphic communication and community engagement.

Meetings of the SDPA
Four meetings of the SDPA have been agreed to date for 2012/13. However, additional meetings can be inserted if necessary. At the current time, issues around the preparation of the strategic development plan are those most likely to trigger the need for additional meetings.

SDPA Meetings 2012/13
• 22 June 2012
• September 2012
• December 2012
• March 2013

Appendix 1: Aims and Objectives of the SDPA

1. To prepare a "strategic development plan" for an area known as a "strategic development plan area" and to keep under review the plan so prepared.

2. Prepare and keep under review a plan, for submission to Scottish Ministers, showing the boundary which the authority propose as the boundary of the strategic development plan area.

3. Set out in the strategic development plan a vision statement, a spatial strategy, and an analysis of the relationship between the vision statement, the spatial strategy and general development land use proposals in the plan area.

4. To monitor changes in the principal physical, economic, social, and environmental characteristics of the strategic development plan area.

5. To monitor the principal purposes for which land is to be used in the area.

6. To monitor the size and distribution of the population of the area.

7. To monitor the infrastructure of the area (including communications, transport and drainage systems and systems for the supply of water and energy) and to monitor how that infrastructure is used.

8. To monitor the impact of the policies and proposals contained within the strategic development plan.

9. To comment on nationally and regionally significantly planning applications.

10. To provide appropriate input to the Regional Transport Strategy, the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future strategies, the Local Development Plans and any other significant issues which may arise from time to time and have a bearing on the Strategic Development Plan.

11. To prepare an implementation programme for action.

12. Prepare such maps, diagrams, illustrations and descriptive matter as may be prescribed by Government or thought appropriate by the SDPA.

13. From time to time, and when main issues and other principal reports are prepared, publish a statement as to the carrying out of those documents and make such documents available by various means including electronic means such as by means of the internet.

14. Other matters as may be prescribed by Government

15. Any other matter which the SDPA consider it appropriate to include.

Extract from the Minute of Agreement between the two Councils

Appendix 2: Performance Monitoring

Statutory Targets

1.   Development Plan Scheme published within the last 12 months

	Achieved	Date
Development Plan Scheme Publication	Yes	20/3/2012

2.   Strategic Development Plan submitted to Scottish Ministers within 4 years of approval of last plan

	Target	On Track?
Strategic Development Plan Submission	August 2013	Yes

3.   Action Programme published within the last two years

	Achieved	Date
Action Programme Publication	Yes	4/12/2009

Staffing / Personnel

4.   Days lost (Sickness, Vacancies, Secondment, Special Leave)

	Sickness	Vacancies	Secondment	Special Leave	Total
Days	0			0	
Percentage	0%			0%	

Transparency and Accountability

5.   Invoices processed for payment

	Number	Percentage
Invoices processed for payment within 21 days		

6.   Freedom of Information requests received (and response within deadline)

	Number	Response within deadline	Percentage
FoI requests received	0	N/A	N/A

7.   Complaints received (and upheld)

	Number	Upheld	Percentage
Complaints received	0	N/A	N/A

8.   SDPA reports to Clerk 10 days and on website 4 days prior to meeting

	Number	Percentage
Reports to Clerk 10 days prior to meeting		
Reports on website 4 days prior to meeting		

9.   Press releases issued and website news items placed

	Number
Press Releases	3
Website News Items	18

10. Unique website visitors and visits

	2010/11	2011/12
Unique visitors	3,709	4,168
Unique visits	7,024	7,207

Plain English / Equalities and Human Rights

11. Use of Plain English

	Current Crystal Marks	New Crystal Marks	New Reviews
Plain English	3	1	1

12. Equalities and Human Rights

	Number	Percentage
Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments	1	N/A

13. Accessible event venues

	Number	Percentage
Accessible Event Venues		

Environmental Responsibility

14. Recycled content of publications

Publication	Copies	Pages	Recycled Content
Annual Report 2011/12	300	8	100%
Main Issues Report		27	100%
Monitoring Statement		39	100%
Housing Need and Demand Assessment		124	100%
Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment		6	100%
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment		4	100%
Structure Plan Risk Assessment		5	100%
Transport Background Paper		10	100%
Climate Change Study		31	100%
Habitats Regulations Assessment		20	100%
SEA Interim Environmental Report		56	100%
Development Plan Scheme 2012/13	300	3	100%

15. Office Paper used (and recycled content)

	Sheets	Recycled Content
Office Paper Used	Unknown	100%

16. Modal split of transport (trips, distance, cost and CO_2)

	Trips	%	Miles	%	Cost	%	CO$_2$ (kg)	%
Air								
Car								
Passenger								
Train								
Bus								
Cycle								
Walk								
Total								