

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	31 st January 2012
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Draft River Don Corridor Framework Supplementary Guidance, in support of the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan.
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/12/025

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 paragraph 22 (1) states that a planning authority may adopt and issue guidance in connection with a local development plan. Aberdeen City Council has already prepared a number of draft Supplementary Guidance documents and has consulted on many of these alongside the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan for a period of 16 weeks (between 24th September 2010 and 17th January 2011).
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval for a new item of draft Supplementary Guidance, the River Don Corridor Framework, to be issued for public consultation. This document has been prepared in support of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP). The public consultation to be undertaken will last for a minimum statutory six weeks. This document provides one means to guide and assess development proposals affecting the River Don Corridor.
- 1.3 Due to the size of these Supplementary Guidance documents, hard copies have not been attached to this report but are available in the Members' Lounge and from the Local Development Plan team. Full copies of the draft Supplementary Guidance can also be accessed from: http://thezone/PI/SL_stratlead_reports.asp

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - (a) Approve the draft River Don Corridor Framework Supplementary Guidance document for a minimum of six weeks' public consultation.
 - (b) Agree that following completion of a public consultation, any comments received and subsequent amendments to the draft

Supplementary Guidance be presented to a future meeting of the Committee for approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This draft Supplementary Guidance has been developed through the Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) Aberdeen project, a demonstration element of the wider European Union SURF Project, for which Aberdeen City Council is the Lead Partner. The SURF Project is 50% funded by the European Regional Development Funds IVB North Sea Region programme. While there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, costs incurred through consultation and publicity related to the proposed guidance will be met through the existing SURF Aberdeen project budget (C27122).

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no known legal or equipment implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 As a major landowner in the city, proposals for the development of land and assets owned by Aberdeen City Council will be subject to assessment in line with the principles and standards set out in the Supplementary Guidance, where applicable.
- 4.3 The progression of this Supplementary Guidance document will provide a clear area based framework for decision making, allowing comprehensive guidance for both applicants and officers, thereby making a significant contribution towards the Council's aim of promoting and achieving sustainable development. Detailed Supplementary Guidance also has value in reducing officer time spent on pre-application discussions.
- 4.4 The proposed River Don Corridor Framework Supplementary Guidance brings clear environmental, social and economic benefits to the River Don Corridor, and Aberdeen. It is intended to guide and inform officers in their assessment of the access, recreational, landscape, cultural and historical, environmental, wildlife and community engagement implications of any given development proposal within the Corridor, thereby effectively driving improvements in these aspects of the Corridor and the quality of the Corridor overall.
- 4.5 This item of new draft Supplementary Guidance has been pre-screened under the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. Council officers, including the SEA Co-ordinator, maintain the opinion that a full SEA is not required for this Guidance. Full confirmation of this is still being awaited from the SEA consultees. If it is deemed necessary that an SEA be carried out, the Guidance will be accompanied by the required environmental report as a part of the public consultation process.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Council agreed the content of the Proposed Plan on 18 August 2010. The Proposed Plan was a critical stage in the plan preparation process and was the result of a significant amount of assessment and public consultation.
- 5.2 Those items of Supplementary Guidance to be carried over from the extant Aberdeen Local Plan have been subject to public consultation and are the subject of separate reports, depending on whether further consultation is required on changes made. The draft River Don Corridor Framework Supplementary Guidance document has been newly produced through the Sustainable Urban Fringes Aberdeen project which has included extensive local community consultation, in part, helping to guide the Framework's direction and content. Full public consultation is now required to gain the views of all stakeholders on the guidance proposed.
- 5.3 The purpose of this Supplementary Guidance document is to provide further information and detail in respect of policies set out in the Local Development Plan, in accordance with the Scottish Government's intention that the Local Development Plan itself focuses on vision, the spatial strategy, overarching and other key policies, and proposals.
- 5.4 The draft River Don Corridor Framework Supplementary Guidance is intended to support the Green Space Network Policy NE1, as contained in the Proposed Plan. As this Policy makes clear, 'The natural environment and open spaces are important for landscape, natural heritage and wider social, health, economic and environmental reasons, such as adapting to climate change and helping to improve air and water quality.' This Framework is area specific and primarily integrates aspects of the Core Paths Plan, Open Space Strategy, Nature Conservation Strategy as well as other strategies, policies and plans that help deliver a high quality natural environment and access to good quality open spaces, making the River Don Corridor a place where people want to live, work and invest. It sets out the Vision, Aims, Objectives and Spatial Plan in relation to the access, recreational, landscape, cultural and historical, environmental, wildlife and community engagement aspects of the River Don Corridor.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The Local Development Plan continues to support the vision of Aberdeen becoming an even more attractive place to live and in which to do business and will ensure that high quality employment opportunities exist. This process aspires to improve the access that the people of Aberdeen have to high quality services that meet their needs. The development and refinement of fit for purpose Supplementary Guidance to assist the Aberdeen Local Development Plan is

paramount to supporting this vision and achieving the goals that Aberdeen aspires to.

- 6.2 The vision for Aberdeen is to be a city which is vibrant, dynamic and forward looking – an even better place to live and work, where people can expect high-quality services that meet their needs. This means making a visible difference to the quality of the city’s urban and natural environment by promoting high quality development and providing an effective infrastructure to make us a world class strategic location.
- 6.3 To do this we must think strategically, facilitate development, engage positively with communities and the business sector and be open and transparent in our decision making. We also have a key role in delivering the vision for the City and Shire as expressed through regional plans and strategies. Planning and Sustainable Development is tasked with seeing that Aberdeen stays at the forefront of planning for the future.
- 6.4 The Supplementary Guidance represented in this report relates to the following Single Outcome Agreement objectives: 1- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe; 2- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people; 10- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need; 12- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations; 13- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity; and 15- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.
- 6.5 The Supplementary Guidance represented in this report meets the vision of the Community Plan in promoting a strong image of the City and a sense of civic pride.
- 6.6 The Supplementary Guidance represented in this report supports the Council’s 5 year Business Plan in terms of protecting and enhancing our high quality natural and built environment, attracting visitors, workers and investment to protect the economic future of the city, and, to facilitate new development projects to improve Aberdeen’s living and working environment.
- 6.7 An equalities and human rights impact assessment (EHRIA) has been carried out in relation to the proposed Supplementary Guidance. The Summary of the EHRIA is provided below, with the full results included as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 6.8 EHRIA Summary: “This Framework sets the vision, context and mechanisms for the long-term improvement of the River Don Corridor; for people, the economy and the environment. The Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment process has highlighted potential

benefits in terms of improving community cohesion and empowerment. It has also identified positive impacts for those with disabilities and older and younger generations in relation to improving the quality and number of access and recreational opportunities. It has identified only neutral impacts for all other groups. Monitoring and review of the Framework will take place alongside that of the Local Development Plan in a five yearly cycle. Any opportunities to increase positive impacts, or mitigate or reduce negative impacts may be identified through the monitoring process. Attempts will be made address the impacts identified and improve the Framework and its implementation as part of the review process.”

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_aldp_document_map.asp
- Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Action Programme
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31716&slD=14342>
- Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority: Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan
<http://www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=423&slD=149>
- Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060017_en_1
- Scottish Planning Series: Planning Circular 1/2009: Development Planning
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/261030/0077887.pdf>
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2008/ssi_20080426_en_1

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Sinclair Laing
Sustainable Development Officer
silaing@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 522 793