

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Environment, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	19 th March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks authority to begin the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. It outlines the timetable for the preparation of the plan and how this fits with the statutory requirement for a five year review, whilst at the same time taking on board the need to comply with the emerging Strategic Development Plan. Proposals for a non statutory period of consultation are made with a view to informing the production of a Main Issues Report, which we would aim to release in January 2014. Statutory periods of consultation would be required at the Main Issues stage and again at the Proposed Plan stage in early 2015. Further reports will be brought before Committee at these stages.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) agree the consultation arrangements outlined in this report;
- (ii) agree the preparation of a consultation report detailing the comments and proposals made, and that these be made available on the website;
- (iii) agree the preparation of a Main Issues Report, taking into consideration the comments received from the consultation, and
- (iv) instruct officers to report back to committee later this year with the draft Main Issues Report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be costs associated with running public workshops, advertising, publicity and printing material. However, these costs can be met from the Development Plan budget. It is likely that an Examination into the Proposed Local Development Plan will take place in 2015 and 2016 and budgetary provision will need to be made for this. The cost of the Examination of the current Local Development Plan was in the region of £100,000.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

This is the start of a significant piece of work that will involve, and impact upon many other council services, public bodies, the business and development industries and the citizens of Aberdeen. The review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan will provide a clear framework for the use of land in Aberdeen and decision making on planning applications. This in turn provides clarity for the public and certainty to the development industry in terms of obtaining finance and investment opportunities in Aberdeen.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Timing

The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP) was adopted in February 2012 and identifies the detailed policies and sites required to deliver the current Structure Plan. It is a vital public document which shapes the future of Aberdeen and which influences significant public and private investment in homes, businesses, shops, infrastructure and facilities.

This report seeks authority to begin the review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Statute requires Local Development Plans to be updated at least every 5 years. At January's Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Committee, members agreed the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Scheme – essentially a timetable for the production of the next LDP. This shows that in order for us to meet the 5 year cycle, the Council will need to begin reviewing the ALDP this year.

At the same time, the Strategic Development Plan Authority are progressing a new Strategic Development Plan (SDP) which will replace the current Structure Plan, and the next ALDP will need to comply with this. Our timetable ensures that in reviewing the ALDP, it can comply with the new SDP which is scheduled to be approved in June 2014.

Development Options

The current Structure Plan required the identification of a substantial amount of greenfield housing and employment land, and this was allocated in the 2012 ALDP. This time around however, it is likely that the emerging SDP will not be requiring the allocation of any additional greenfield land, but simply rolling forward the existing allocations. As a result, the emerging SDP expects the housing and employment allocations identified in the current LDP to be carried forward into the next one. Because of this, we do not intend to issue a call for additional greenfield housing and employment development options from landowners and developers, as happened at the beginning of the current ALDP process. However, plans for the redevelopment of

brownfield sites and other proposals will be encouraged and we would intend to inform developers of this approach.

It is still likely however, that greenfield development options will continue to be promoted by the development industry. All proposals will therefore be assessed against a set of sustainability criteria which were developed during the preparation of the current ALDP. These are considered to be a robust means of assessing a site's suitability for development and the process was considered both thorough and transparent by the Scottish Government reporters who examined the current ALDP.

Main Issues Report

Approval of this report will start the process of identifying what the main planning issues in Aberdeen are likely to be over the coming years. The purpose of this stage is to gather information, views and proposals on what should be included in a Main Issues Report which we intend to publish in January 2014. The Main Issues Report will be the primary focus for community and other stakeholder engagement during the LDP process. The Main Issues Report must:

- Set out the authority's general proposals for development in the area, i.e. where development should and should not occur in Aberdeen.
- Set out what development should be seeking to achieve, i.e. issues such as environmental sustainability, support for local communities and the promotion of economic growth.
- Contain one or more reasonable alternative sets of proposals.
- Although not required by law, the Scottish Government has recommended that comparisons are drawn between the current ALDP and the next one.

Community and other Stakeholder Engagement

Prior to the publication of the Main Issues Report, we must have regard to the views of Key Agencies such as NESTRANS, SEPA and SNH. Views expressed by other stakeholders such as community councils, developers and the general public will also be taken into account. While it is possible for proposals not included in discussion at the Main Issues Report stage to find their way into the Plan, the Scottish Government has emphasised that early consultation and engagement the best way forward in preparing plans.

Consequently, if a proposal has not been subject to full consultation at the stage of the Main Issues Report, it is much less likely to be included at a later stage. However, it must also be noted that not all proposals submitted will be appropriate for inclusion in the Main Issues Report.

The Main Issues Report stage links closely to the statutory process of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). At this stage, alternative proposals and policy options can be environmentally appraised so that a draft Environmental Report can be published alongside the Main Issues Report. The early identification of proposals and issues will help to ensure that the revised ALDP is sustainable.

Proposal for consultation

It is proposed that an 9 week pre-Main Issues consultation be opened, beginning on 15 April (following Easter). This is a non-statutory consultation at this stage – statutory consultations will also take place at the later Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan stages. As part of this a series of pre-Main Issues workshops are proposed to take place around Aberdeen involving local communities. Their aim would be to inform everyone of the process that's involved in reviewing the ALDP and to hear views on what the main planning issues are which the next ALDP should be concentrating on.

We also propose to release a questionnaire online and through other means to seek views on main issues. Because we anticipate rolling forward the allocations from the current ALDP (reflecting the likely SDP position), there is no formal call for greenfield housing and employment allocations. However, should such sites come forward, or other proposals such as brownfield developments, the opportunity should be given to submit them at this stage in order to allow early consideration. The sustainability criteria and SEA mentioned above will be used to assess their suitability. This approach should allow for a fuller and more transparent debate at the Main Issues stage.

Officers have already informed community councils and the Civic Forum of the workshops subject to committee approval. This is in response to suggestions in the past that as much advance notice as possible should be given to such events. We have made it known to the community councils that we are willing to accommodate any reasonable requests for further meetings with local communities, communities of interest or individual community councils.

In addition, meetings and discussion will take place with Key Agencies. This is largely done through the Future Infrastructure for Services (or FIRS Group) which was set up at the beginning of the current ALDP process. Other Council services will be engaged through an officer based Local Development Plan Working Group. We also propose to engage members by holding workshops and meetings around the key stages of the process.

Once the pre-Main Issues consultation is complete, it is proposed to place all comments onto the website. We will then prepare a Main Issues Report and associated supporting documents such as the

Strategic Environmental Assessment. These will be presented to Committee later this year.

6. IMPACT

The Local Development Plan contributes to the following Single Outcome Agreement priorities:

1. We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe;
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 and enhance it for future generations;
14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production;
15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The Local Development Plan contributes to "Aberdeen - A Smarter City" in terms of providing a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and by promoting biodiversity and nature conservation, encouraging wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside, and improving access to affordable housing in the private sectors by working with developers to maximize the effective use of developer contributions

The report raises awareness and understanding of the development plan review process and outlines how people can take part in it. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available on the Council's website.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Local Development Plan

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_local_development_plan.asp

Aberdeen Local Development Plan Scheme

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=47980&slD=9484>

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority:
Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and Proposed Strategic Development Plan 2013

<http://www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk/home/home.asp>

Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/17/contents>

Scottish Planning Series: Planning Circular 1/2009: Development Planning

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/02/13153723/0>

The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2008/426/contents/made>

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Andrew Brownrigg

Team Leader (Development Plan)

abrownrigg@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Tel 01224 523317