

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	12 November 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen Local Development Plan Review – Main Issues Report
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/182

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

We are currently undertaking a review of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. At the 19 March 2013 Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee, members agreed to the preparation of a Main Issues Report which would take into consideration the comments received from a pre-main issues consultation that took place earlier this year. This report summarises the outcomes of that consultation and presents the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and background documents.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee;

- (a) note the outcomes of the pre-Main Issues Consultation;
- (b) note the contents of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report;
- (c) agrees to the publication of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report for a 10 week consultation period from 13 January 2014 until 24 March 2014, with the outcomes to be reported to the Enterprise, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee with the Proposed Plan in due course ; and
- (d) agree to the publication of the supporting documents listed in the Appendices to inform that consultation.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be costs associated with printing the Main Issues Report and some of the supporting documents. There will also be costs associated with running public events, 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 has been 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 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

At the 19 March 2013 Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee, members agreed to the preparation of a Main Issues Report, taking into consideration the comments received from a pre-main issues consultation that took place earlier this year. This is the first stage in producing a revised Local Development Plan that will eventually replace the current Plan which was adopted in 2012. This report summarises the outcomes of the pre-main issues consultation and presents the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and background documents. The Main Issues Report is attached in Appendix 1.

In the preparation of a Local Development Plan, Section 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (1997) requires planning authorities to first compile a Main Issues Report. This must set out our general proposals for development in the area and, in particular, proposals as to where development should and should not occur. The Main Issues Report is the key document in the early stage of effectively engaging with the local community on future development in Aberdeen.

Advice from the Scottish Government contained in Circular 1/09: Development Planning makes it clear that the purpose of the Main Issues Report is to front-load effective engagement on the plan. The Main Issues Report is not a draft version of the plan but rather presents a preferred option and reasonable alternatives for development, informed by a sound evidence base. It also states that the publication of the Main Issues Report should come before the planning authority has reached a firm view as to the strategy that should be followed, and the authority's approach should not be one of defending their proposals but one of genuine openness to different ideas. It is not until the publication of the Proposed Plan, which is programmed for February 2015, that the planning authority is expected to have reached a view. To help Members engage in the consultation on the Main Issues Report, without having reached a view (as required by the Circular), we are proposing that at this stage the Committee agree only that the Report be issued for public consultation. We are not requesting

endorsement of the content - that will come at the Proposed Plan stage.

Pre-Main Issues Engagement

A considerable amount of engagement has already taken place. The outcome from the consultation has helped us in preparing the Main Issues Report and took a variety of formats;

School Engagement

Workshops were held between April and June 2013. Members of the LDP team facilitated at all events and some workshops were also attended by local ward members. Eight schools actively took part by way of either a workshop exercise or a fieldwork exercise. Over 400 pupils (S1 – S3) were involved from the following schools:

- Cults Academy
- Aberdeen Waldorf School
- Bucksburn Academy
- St Margaret's School for Girls
- Hazlehead Academy
- Aberdeen Grammar
- Camphill School
- Robert Gordon's College

We have committed to further school engagements at the Main Issues and Proposed Plan stages.

Public Workshops

A number of public workshops were held at various locations around the city. We got good feedback from these, including suggestions on reaching a wider audience next time.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were made available at the workshops, in all libraries and online.

Community Council Planning Toolkits

Our Planning Toolkits were designed to give Community Councils the chance to record the main planning issues affecting their local area through maps, photographs and notes. Sixteen toolkits were completed by Community Councils across Aberdeen between April and June 2013.

All of the responses we received are available on our website here; http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_pre_mir_engagement.asp

There is a substantial amount of information here so we have prepared summaries of each of the consultations which identify the main themes arising from each format. These can be found in Appendix 2. We would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their participation on our website and through social media.

Development Bids

Over 80 development bids were submitted by developers and landowners, promoting sites for inclusion in the Main Issues Report. These are available to view at the same link above but are discussed in more detail in the Settlement Strategy section below. An assessment of all these proposals against a sustainability checklist has been undertaken. A report of the assessments has been produced and can be seen in Appendix 3.

Contents of the Main Issues Report

Spatial Strategy

There are two core sections in the Main Issues Report - the Spatial Strategy and the Main Issues. The Spatial Strategy takes the substantial housing and employment allowances from the Proposed Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (Proposed SDP) and translates this into land allocations. Development Planning Regulations require that the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan must be consistent with the Strategic Development Plan. This Main Issues Report has been written to comply with the Proposed SDP which is currently undergoing Examination. Any changes to the Proposed SDP arising out of the Examination will be reflected in the Proposed Local Development Plan.

A major component of the Proposed SDP is that it sets out the allocations for housing and employment land which must be identified in Local Development Plans.

In this case, these were effectively carried over from the 2009 Structure Plan and were identified in the 2012 Aberdeen Local Development Plan. Although the phasing dates have been moved forward in the Proposed SDP, the greenfield allowances for both housing and employment land which the next Local Development Plan has to identify remains unchanged. The only exception is that the Phase 2 housing sites (which are already identified for the period 2017-26) would be released by the next Local Development Plan. Therefore there is no requirement for major changes to the spatial strategy in the next Local Development Plan and the identified greenfield employment and housing sites will remain the same. This is our preferred spatial strategy.

The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 stipulates however, that the Main Issues Report should contain both a preferred strategy and reasonable alternatives. Although there is no requirement for additional

allocations, the development industry and landowners submitted over 80 proposals for inclusion in the Main Issues Report during the Pre-Main Issues consultation stage. Some of the proposals on brownfield or previously identified sites are considered appropriate and have been included as 'preferred' development options here. The remaining sites are however, included as alternatives to our preferred option.

The brownfield and other proposals that have emerged and which we feel may merit inclusion into the next Local Development Plan include the following and more details on these can be found in the Spatial Strategy section of the Main Issues Report;

- Craiginches Prison – opportunity site for development.
- Grove Nursery – nursery and ancillary facilities in association with a social enterprise.
- Raiths Transport Interchange – employment uses on the unused part of the site.
- Charlie's House, Woodend Hospital West – specialist care centre for children.
- Millers Dyce Drive (Part of OP32 – this is a rezoning to general business and industrial land to reflect a planning consent, not a new site).

Other proposals detailed elsewhere in the Main Issues Report include the following;

- Retail proposals (in Sections 2 Aberdeen City Centre and Section 3 Retail Centres outwith the City Centre)
- New Schools Proposals (in Section 4 Infrastructure and Transport)
- A number of transportation proposals (in Section 4)
- Aberdeen Harbour expansion (in Section 5 Supporting Business and Industrial Development)
- Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre (in Section 5)
- Ness Solar Farm (in Section 9 Climate Change)

The Main Issues

During the Pre-MIR stakeholder engagement, a number of broad themes emerged which people were particularly interested in or concerned about. We have structured the Main Issues Report around these themes;

- City Centre and Retailing
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Business and Industry
- Housing and Community
- Design and the Built Environment
- Natural Environment
- Resources

Within this section of the Main Issues Report each issue is explained and the main issues surrounding the topic are identified. We have identified 13 main issues from these themes and have set out reasonable options to deal with the issue, including our preferred option. For each of the main issues we are asking for views on;

- Whether people agree with the preferred option?
- If not, whether any of the alternative options are supported?
- If not, another option should be considered?

There are also a number of questions on other related issues which we would like to hear views on.

In compiling the Main Issues Report and identifying suitable locations for development and policies the Development Plan Team has also engaged with key agencies and infrastructure providers, the Scottish Government, the Strategic Development Planning Authority and Aberdeenshire Council. This engagement will continue through to the Proposed Plan.

Supporting Documents

A number of background documents have been prepared to support and inform the Main Issues Report.

A Monitoring Statement forms part of the evidence base for the plan. As the current Local Development Plan was adopted in 2012 and is fairly up to date, the Monitoring Statement concentrates on the policy changes required by the new Aberdeen Local Development Plan (see Appendix 4).

In order to meet the Structure Plan requirements for housing on brownfield sites the Brownfield Urban Potential Study was updated in 2013. This will continue to be updated each year (see Appendix 5).

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of all plans, programmes and strategies to be undertaken. An Environmental Report has been produced and will be published for consultation alongside the Main Issues Report. The SEA provides an assessment of the impact of the sites and policies on the environment. For any identified impacts on the environment mitigation measures have been proposed, and a framework of how these impacts will be monitored is included in the Environmental Report (see Appendix 6).

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken to satisfy the requirements placed on local authorities under section 1 of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. This requires local authorities to exercise their flood risk related functions with a view to reducing overall flood risk and promoting sustainable flood risk management. The Assessment looks at a number of potential sources of flood risk which may be relevant for development in Aberdeen (see Appendix 7).

The Strategic Development Planning Authority, in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils commissioned an Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study to examine the future retail potential in the region. This made a number of recommendations on potential retail sites and policy and has been used to inform the contents of the City Centre and Retail sections in the Main Issues Report (see Appendix 8).

An Onshore Wind Spatial Framework (which is a requirement of the draft Scottish Planning Policy) has been prepared to assess the opportunities for identifying areas suitable for wind turbine developments. The countryside surrounding Aberdeen within the local authority boundary is limited to a small area and together with the presence of Aberdeen Airport there is not the scope to identify suitable sites for large scale wind farms. The Local Development Plan will continue to support the principle of a wide range of renewable or low-carbon energy developments and a criteria-based policy for assessing proposals is the most appropriate method for dealing with applications for wind turbines and other renewable developments (see Appendix 10).

These documents can be found on the secure website at;
http://thezone/directorate_zone/enterprise_planning_infrastructure/psd/SL_stratlead_reports.asp

The documents will appear on the public website when the Committee papers are released on 5th November at;
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13290&path=0>

Next Steps

The official start to the public consultation on the Main Issues Report will be after the Christmas break on 13 January 2014 and it will run for 10 weeks, rather than the statutory minimum of 6 weeks. This consultation period will allow time for the community and development industry to respond on what is a significant document for Aberdeen.

To maximise community engagement we will carry out a number of consultation events which will be publicised through our community networks, including community councils and our website. We will also investigate some of the suggestions on publicity made during the pre-main issues consultation. These included advertising in shops and NHS facilities and setting up a stand in a shopping centre. The Main Issues Report will be published on the Council website and copies will be made available in all the City's libraries and at Marischal College. In order to reduce the amount of paper used in the consultation and allow for consultees to search effectively for the information that is of interest to them a CD ROM version will be produced which will include the supporting documents.

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 (see Appendix 9).

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Failure to have an up to date Local Development Plan will leave the Council more vulnerable to planning appeals.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The appendices to this report are listed below. Due to their size, Appendices 3 to 8 and Appendix 10 are not contained within this report, but hard copies are available to view in the Members Library and at Marischal College.

- Appendix 1 Aberdeen Local Development Plan Main Issues Report
- Appendix 2 Pre-Main Issues Consultation Summary
- Appendix 3 Development Options Assessment Report
- Appendix 4 Monitoring Statement
- Appendix 5 Brownfield Urban Capacity Study
- Appendix 6 Environmental Report
- Appendix 7 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Appendix 8 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Retail Study
- Appendix 9 Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment
- Appendix 10 Onshore Wind Spatial Framework

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>

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority:
Aberdeen City and Shire Proposed Strategic Development Plan

<http://www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=1015&SID=149>

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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