



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
INTERIM EDINBURGH AND SOUTH EAST OF SCOTLAND
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN JOINT COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 22 OCTOBER 2007
CONFERENCE ROOMS 1 & 2, JOHN MUIR HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor B Turner (Convener), East Lothian Council
Councillor R Imrie, Midlothian Council
Councillor R De Bold, West Lothian Council
Councillor W Boyle, West Lothian Council
Councillor C Riddell-Carre, Scottish Borders Council
Councillor V Davidson, Scottish Borders Council
Councillor A Martin, Fife Council
Councillor J Beare, Fife Council
Councillor J Lowrie, City of Edinburgh Council
Councillor S McIvor, City of Edinburgh Council

Council Officials Present:

Mr P Collins, East Lothian Council
Mr I Glen, East Lothian Council
Ms J Long, Midlothian Council
Mr J Dickson, West Lothian Council
Mr B Frater, Scottish Borders Council
Mr M Wanless, Scottish Borders Council
Ms P Ewan, Fife Council
Mr K Winter, Fife Council

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Mr J Inman, City of Edinburgh Council
Mr K Tippen, City of Edinburgh Council

Clerk:

Ms S Birrell

Visitors Present:

No visitors formally attended the meeting.

Apologies:

Councillor P MacLennan

Councillor D Milligan

Councillor J Mowat

Councillor M Day

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Turner introduced himself as the Convener of the Committee for this meeting in Cllr MacLennan's absence, and invited those present to introduce themselves to the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2007

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true record.

Concerns were raised by Cllr Davidson regarding the rotation of the secretariat for 2008 to City of Edinburgh Council. Mr Collins informed the Committee that the rotation by alphabetical order of Local Authorities had been the standard practice of the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan Joint Liaison Committee. Cllr Lowrie suggested that the secretariat could rotate for each meeting, as was the practice with the Fire Board. Mr Dickson explained that the retention of the secretariat for a full year had worked well in the past and that he would recommend that the Joint Committee continued to operate this way. He acknowledged Cllr Davidson's concerns relating to City of Edinburgh Council's perceived dominance but added that the sharing of the secretariat had improved joint working across all Local Authorities in the long term.

Cllr Imrie agreed that all Local Authorities were invited to share their views at the Joint Committee and that as a representative of one of the smallest Local Authorities in attendance he had experienced an equal opportunity to voice the opinions of Midlothian Council.

Cllr Davidson responded that the four Lothian Authorities should be mindful of their previous experience in joint-working and aware of the potential concerns of new member Councils.

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROJECT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Mr Glen spoke to the report in detail, highlighting that the PRINCE2 Project Management Structure would be utilised to deliver the Strategic Development Plan. He drew the Committee's attention to various aspects of the project required by the PRINCE2 mechanism, including a project mandate, definition of each phase of the project and its overall aim, a corporate body, which would be this Committee, and a project board, project executive and project assurance. He detailed the nature of these aspects as contained within the report, and added that the individual Councils had accepted that the agreed Project Manager post should be extended from a one year post to one of up to three years .

Cllr Riddell-Carre supported the inclusion of the Joint Committee as a referral point for issues which could not be resolved by the Project Board or Executive.

In response to a question from Cllr Boyle, Mr Glen confirmed that the Project Manager post would not necessarily continue until the completion of Phase 4 of the project. In response to a further question from Cllr Davidson, regarding delegation of decision making to the Joint Committee and an appropriate budget, Mr Glen confirmed that a further report on these matters would be brought to this Committee. Mr Collins added that once recommendations had been forwarded from the Scottish Government on the status of Strategic Development Planning Authorities they could be used as a starting point for a subsequent report.

Mr Dickson indicated that the system outlined in the report constituted an effective approach, in that recommendations from Scottish Government could be discussed by independent Councillors working together at the Joint Committee, and then taken to individual Councils for comment if appropriate.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- i) to note progress on defining the Structure Development Plan project management structure and appointing a Project Manager; and
- ii) to the recommendations detailed in the report in respect of the nature of the Project and the make-up of the Project Board, Project Executive, and Project Assurance functions.

4. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITIES: DESIGNATION ORDERS AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE CONSULTATION

Mr Inman spoke to the report, highlighting the Committee's joint response to the consultation on the Scottish Government's Draft Designation Orders and Statutory Guidance proposals which was contained in the Appendix to the report. He indicated that individual Councils would be expected to respond separately to the consultation,

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but that it had been deemed appropriate that a joint response should be forwarded from the Joint Committee.

He spoke in detail to the Appendix, which contained the draft response for approval. He highlighted: the need for better alignment between the boundaries of economic, transport and strategic plans; the lack of advice on delegated authority provisions; concern over the assumption that the creation of dedicated virtual teams to work on the Strategic Development Plan could be cost free or cost neutral; that the City of Edinburgh were willing to meet a larger share of the costs in return for greater voting strength; that agreeing plan boundaries was unlikely to be an issue, and that Fife's split position had particular resource implications. He reminded the Committee that Fife Council were in a unique position of involvement with two Strategic Development Plans. He emphasised that further consideration should be given to the concept of each member Council providing an equal share of funding, particularly smaller Local Authorities who could be expected to increase their financial input in the near future.

Mr Winter commented that Fife Council could be involved with three Strategic Plans; the Dundee City Region, Edinburgh City Region, and other parts of Fife which were outwith either of these areas, and asked that the wording of the response could be amended to reflect this.

Mr Dickson recommended an amendment to the response to question 5, so that the sentence read "In addition, there may be a number of overheads to be met such as providing dedicated...ICT" as opposed to "In addition there will be a number of overheads to be met such as providing dedicated...ICT".

Mr Inman asked if a comment relating to the expectation that a dedicated team should be set up in a neutral location should be included in the consultation response to Question 3. Cllr Martin asserted that in his opinion the location of these teams would be a matter for Local Authorities to resolve. A neutral location had been provided for SEStran but funding had been made available from the Scottish Executive for this purpose. He pointed out that provided the work was carried out effectively the location of the team would be an ancillary matter.

Cllr Imrie emphasised that the Scottish Government should be made aware that close links between transportation, economic development, and planning meant that it would be advantageous to align the boundaries between the joint bodies concerned with these issues. He expressed apprehension regarding the expectation that the Strategic Development Plan could be delivered cost neutrally, pointing out that the officers involved already had full time remits because of the ongoing Local Plan projects. He remarked that the initial set up of the Strategic Development Plan would require an extra commitment of resources which would not be necessary once the Plans were in use. He added that the deadline of October 2008 would represent a challenge for completion of the project.

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Cllr Riddell-Carre emphasised that she would support equal financial shares from each member Councils, and remarked that further funding should be made available from the Scottish Government.

Mrs Long highlighted that the response had made it clear that there would be costs involved in the project and that Councils should decide how to operate their own

model of working. She agreed to amend the sentence in the response to question 5 as requested by Mr Dickson.

Mr Collins informed the Committee that SEStran had been allocated a budget of £500,000 for their joint transportation project.

Decision

The Committee agreed that the report should be forwarded to the Scottish Government as its response to the consultation on the draft Designation Orders and Statutory Guidance subject to a change in the response to question 5 from “In addition there will be a number of overheads to be met such as providing dedicated...ICT” to “In addition, there may be a number of overheads to be met such as providing dedicated...ICT”.

5. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REQUEST FOR THE PREPARATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON WINDFARMS

Ms Long spoke to the report, highlighting that it had originated from the circulation of the letter which had been attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The letter had requested that Local Authorities updated planning policies and prepared spatial frameworks regarding the establishment of windfarms.

She explained that the recent publishing of SPP 6 had also recommended that supplementary planning guidance should be prepared before advice was included in new style development plans. She highlighted the relation between this guidance and SPP6, and the possibility of reviewing and/or amending agreed policies on this matter. She spoke to the proposed response to the letter, and outlined the recommendations contained within the report.

Cllr Riddell-Carre asked what brief would be given to the consultant mentioned in the letter from the Scottish Government, emphasising that Scottish Borders Council were of the opinion that there were several windfarms within the Scottish Borders and they would be concerned if a consultant recommended that any more should be planned for their area.

Ms Long responded that the Joint Committee could request that the brief for the consultant was discussed with Local Authorities, and that a copy of the final brief should be forwarded to relevant officers. She agreed that the current view of developing windfarms with reference to landscape capacity could be replaced by an industry view if the consultant or their brief was more concerned with these matters. She advised that she would add a request from the Joint Committee that the brief for

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the consultant should be made available. Cllr Turner agreed that the Scottish Government could consult with Local Authorities regarding the brief.

Cllr Martin expressed concern that the letter had indicated that guidance relating to windfarms would be included in Strategic Development Plans, which would mean that Fife had more than one policy covering their Local Authority area, and asked if the consultant would take this into account. Ms Long suggested that guidance

supplied by the consultant would be of a generic nature and reminded the Committee that a further report would be brought to a future meeting on this matter.

Cllr Imrie commented that the Joint Committee would not be drawing up the terms of reference for the consultant but that he would expect that the consultant would be asked to look at appropriate places for the situation of windfarms. He recommended that the working group should meet as soon as possible so that they could potentially influence the brief for the consultant before they were appointed.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- i) to note the terms of the Scottish Government's letter with respect to the preparation of supplementary planning guidance on windfarm development;
- ii) to welcome the offer of consultancy advice but express some concern about the production of a further layer of national planning policy guidance;
- iii) to ask that the Scottish Government seeks consultation with Local Authorities on the terms of the brief of the planning consultant and forwards a copy of the final brief to all Local Authorities; and
- iv) to note the intention to establish an officer working group to consider and report back on an appropriate response in the context of the forthcoming Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland.

6. ADDITIONAL ITEM: HOUSING TASK FORCE UPDATE

Mr Glen gave a short verbal update on the Housing Task Force, informing the Committee that the four Lothian Local Authorities had been invited to present to the next meeting of the Housing Task Force. Elected members were not required to attend this meeting but a workshop session would be arranged for November 2007 to which all elected members would be invited.

A presentation had been prepared by the relevant four member Councils, with a focus on the premise that planning issues were not the sole reason for ongoing housing difficulties in the Lothian Areas, as infrastructure matters had also affected new housing projects.

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Cllr Imrie remarked that previous correspondence from the Task Force had not resulted in a meeting and that he had been pleased that the four Lothian Authorities had been invited to attend the meeting this week. He recommended that if the Convener of the Committee was available to attend he should also be present on behalf of the Committee, especially as housing developers would be present.

Cllr Lowrie commented that the notice provided for the meeting was not appropriate and that notification should have been sent at least ten days in advance. Cllr Riddell-Carre agreed that an elected member should attend the meeting, preferably the Convener of this Committee.

Mr Dickson advised that the provision of relevant infrastructure was a significant factor holding up house building in the West Lothian area. Cllr Imrie agreed, and added that the continuation of elected member involvement would ensure that these issues were brought to the attention of the Task Force.

In response to a question from Cllr Turner, Mr Glen advised that it would not be necessary to request attendance and that an elected member could be present along with officers.

Mr Dickson suggested that if Cllr Turner was not available, Cllr Imrie could attend as an alternative representative. Cllr Turner agreed to discuss the matter with Mr Glen after the meeting.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- i) to note the verbal report; and
- ii) that Cllr Turner or Cllr Imrie should attend the meeting of the Housing Task Force to represent elected members.

6. AOCB

Cllr Martin requested that elected members should be given an opportunity to meet informally to discuss the remit of the IESESSDPJC and improve relations between the four Lothian Authorities and Fife and Borders Councils. Cllr Turner suggested that all elected members from all six Authorities could be invited to an event. In response to a question from Mr Collins, it was confirmed that officers would not be required to make a formal presentation at this event.

Cllr Riddell-Carre suggested that name cards should be prepared for all attendees at Committee meetings.

Cllr Imrie asked for a review of the preferred meeting day and time of Monday mornings.

Decision

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The Committee agreed:-

- i) that lunch would be provided after the next meeting of the Committee to give an opportunity for elected members to interact in a less formal setting;
- ii) that name cards would be provided by City of Edinburgh Council for all attendees at the Committee; and
- iii) that the preferred meeting day and time should be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting was, subject to change, confirmed as 10 am on 28 January 2008. It was noted that the meeting would be held in Edinburgh City Chambers and the secretariat would rotate to City of Edinburgh Council from January for the calendar year 2008.

Cllr Imrie registered a vote of thanks to the Convener.