

Structure Plan Review and the Strategic Development Plan

Planning Committee
19 April 2007

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Committee on strategic planning matters, including the Structure Plan Review and early progress on joint working towards a new city region strategic development plan.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Scottish Ministers have endorsed the proposal to abandon the structure plan review. The Lothians Councils, and Fife and Scottish Borders Councils, can now securely focus efforts on preparing the ground for a new Strategic Development Plan for the Edinburgh city region. Early work on aligning data and monitoring criteria will continue and the project plan will be further refined. An interim Members' City Region Joint Committee has been established to oversee joint working in the run up to the new development plan system in mid 2008.

3 Main report

Strategic Planning Overview

- 3.1 The Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 received Royal Assent in December 2006. It is an important milestone in the reform of the planning system and the culmination of a series of consultations and white papers published from 2001 onwards.
- 3.2 It contains the provisions for the form and content of new city region Strategic Development Plans (SDP) and prescribes their preparation process. An SDP process flowchart is included in Appendix 1, based on an interpretation of the Act by CEC officers.

- 3.3 Many of the detailed provisions will be set out in secondary legislation, including identifying the local authorities required to work together on an Edinburgh city region SDP. The Executive's Planning Act implementation programme aims for secondary legislation to be published in draft in mid-2007 and in finalised form in mid-2008.
- 3.4 Previous reports have dealt with two other relevant national level strategic planning processes: the reviews of the National Planning Framework (draft autumn this year) and the West Edinburgh Planning Framework (being finalised).

Structure Plan Review 2020

- 3.5 The joint Lothian Councils wrote to Scottish Ministers in January inviting them to support the proposed abandonment of the SPR and the refocusing of collaborative effort on early work on a city region strategic development plan. A response was received from SEDD on 23 March confirming ministers are content that the current review process is abandoned, given the policy context has changed significantly since the plan was approved in 2004. This is a very positive development and allows preparatory SDP joint working to proceed securely. The letter has been placed in Group Rooms.
- 3.6 The Scottish Executive makes a number of other points:
- The housing land supply issue is crucial in the Edinburgh city region
 - It is essential that the new SDP makes more land available, in line with identified need
 - The Scottish Executive is concerned at the pace of delivery of housing land
 - The Local Authorities should seek an early resolution of difficulties delaying South East Wedge developments
 - close monitoring is needed and, if necessary, additional land should be released in line with ELSP Policy HOU10
 - local authorities are expected to ensure affordable housing is delivered on allocated sites

- 3.7 Ministers have also asked that the joint councils submit, by July this year:

“a succinct overview of recent and planned house building in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and proposals for the release of land overcoming planning constraints which inhibit progress on the provision of new housing.”

- 3.8 This work is being programmed by the ELSP Steering Group and will be reported to Committee and to the JLC in due course. The opportunity will be taken to reflect the joint committee's strong concern that a lack of infrastructure should not hold back house completions. A clear picture will be presented to

ministers on Lothians infrastructure issues and other factors constraining delivery.

Monitoring the current structure plan

- 3.9 Abandonment does not remove the need to monitor the performance of ELSP policies, housing land policies in particular, and track the progress on its key proposals and schemes. The Annual Housing Monitor 2006, based on Housing Land Audit 2006, was reported to the ELSPJLC on 26 March (report placed in Group Rooms). It confirms the regional 5-year land supply sits at 24,620 units or 90.8% of the recalculated Structure Plan target of 27,123. This therefore marginally exceeds the Policy HOU10 land release trigger of 90%. The supply in East Lothian (116%) and Edinburgh (99%) compensates for significant shortfalls in West Lothian (76%) and Midlothian (72%).
- 3.10 The Housing Monitor identifies additional sources of land in Midlothian and West Lothian, typically relating to known strategic housing land allocations and other supported schemes that are identified but not yet included in, or were not technically effective at the Audit cut-off date. When these are included, the total 5-year supply rises to 98.8%.
- 3.11 The Monitor also confirms the continuing predominance of brownfield developments which account for nearly three-quarters of all completions since 2001. Edinburgh has a 93% brownfield rate.
- 3.12 12% of completions since 2001 have been affordable homes. This equates to around 2,600 homes or 520 per year. The Lothians effective land supply includes land that will yield an increased rate of affordable housing delivery over the next five years.

Structure Plan Transport Modelling

- 3.13 In approving the ELSP, Ministers required that transport modelling should inform the early structure plan review. Last year CEC commissioned Halcrows to carry out modelling on behalf of the four Lothian Councils. A detailed proposal was considered by the ELSPJLC in January.
- 3.14 Although Ministers have now endorsed the Councils' proposed abandonment of the SPR, it is still important to progress the modelling work - it will inform the preparation of the city region SDP by providing baseline information and show how the current structure plan strategy impacts on the transport network. The work on testing the transport effects of future strategic developments patterns will build on this base. The work is being funded through the City Growth Fund (CGF).

Preparing for a new Strategic Development Plan

- 3.15 Considerable progress has been made on establishing governance arrangements for new SDP joint working. On 26 March the new joint Committee, the Interim Edinburgh and the Lothians Strategic Development Plan

Joint Committee (the JC) met, informally, for the first time. Members from Fife and Scottish Borders councils were represented.

3.16 The ELSPJLC and the JC endorsed a constitution for the new member committee (report and constitution placed in Group Rooms) which establishes it on similar lines to the JLC. In the interim period, and until the ELSP is formally replaced, the JLC will continue to exist to deal with Lothians Structure Plan business. The Key features are:

- proposed name: Interim Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee
- 12 members, two from each Council
- Convener and Vice-Convener, and secretariat authority, rotates annually
- supported by a senior officers' steering group, responsible for agenda setting and project management
- meets at least four times per year
- quorum of four members and at least three councils represented
- simple majority voting
- no separate budget

3.17 Committee is invited to agree that the new Joint Committee be established on the basis of the proposed constitution and notes the requirement to nominate two members to it following the May election.

SDP project planning

3.18 A facilitated project planning workshop with officers from the six prospective SDP planning authorities was held on 7 March in Dunfermline. Useful progress was made on defining the scope of the project and identifying outcomes and outputs, organisational structures and project risks.

3.19 A report on this exercise, including a preliminary project plan, has been placed in Group Rooms. Further facilitated workshops will build on this exercise and the aim is to report a fully worked-up project plan to the next meetings of the JLC and JC, and thereafter to this Committee for approval.

Green Belt Study

3.20 A Green Belt landscape study was identified as one early workstream that could and should be taken forward now. On 26 March, the JLC confirmed its support for undertaking a Green Belt study, agreed to tender for the work and requested a report to its next meeting on the tenders received and on the funding implications.

- 3.21 The report (also available in Group Rooms) was referred back to the individual Lothians councils for a view in principle on funding contributions. Committee is invited to respond that it endorses the principle that financial liability arising from joint working should reflect representation on the joint committee. In this case, the costs of the Green Belt Study (subject to their reasonableness and approval) should be shared equally between the joint structure plan authorities.

Liaison with other regional processes

- 3.22 Links at officer level are well established with the other two main regional scale forward planning processes: SEStran and its Regional Transport Strategy work, and Scottish Enterprise's work with the region's councils on the developing economic development strategy, including the business of the Regional Economic Forum. The SDP project plan will address the need to align and co-ordinate these three exercises. This will include the relevant Directors meeting regularly and co-ordinating objectives and process. To emphasise the linkage with SEStran, it is proposed to hold a meeting between the joint liaison committee and the SEStran board.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Agreement to commissioning a Green Belt study will incur costs. Those costs are unknown at this stage and Joint Committee will be asked to approve any commitment in due course. Any expenditure implications beyond existing budgets would be reported to this Committee for consideration.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 With conditional ministerial endorsement of the abandonment of the Structure Plan Review, the Lothian Councils, with their two probable new partners, can now focus efforts on preparing the ground for a new Strategic Development Plan for the Edinburgh city region. Early work on aligning data and monitoring criteria will continue and the project plan will be further refined. Creating the new city region joint strategic planning committee is a very positive milestone in effective joint working.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) welcomes the endorsement by Scottish Ministers of the proposed abandonment of the Structure Plan Review, allowing effort to focus securely on preparing the ground for a new SDP;
 - b) notes that a housing overview will be prepared in response to the ministerial letter and reported back to Committee for approval, and that this provides an opportunity to highlight outstanding infrastructure constraints;

- c) agrees that the new SDP Joint Committee be established on the basis of the proposed constitution and notes the requirement to nominate two members to it following the May election;
- d) notes progress made on project planning the SDP preparatory work with Fife and Scottish Borders councils; and
- e) advises the JLC that the costs of the Green Belt Study (subject to their reasonableness and approval) should be shared equally between the joint structure plan authorities on the basis of parity of representation and financial commitment.

Alan Henderson

PP **Andrew M Holmes**
Director of City Development

Appendices Appendix 1: Strategic Development Plan Preparation Process

Contact/tel Ken Tippen
Tel: 0131 469 3613
e-mail: ken.tippen@edinburgh.gov.uk

Wards affected Citywide

Background Papers Report to ELSPJLC, Edinburgh Green Belt Study, 26 March 2007

Report to IESESSDPJC, Strategic Development Plan: Project Update, 26 March 2007

Report to ELSPJLC, Interim Edinburgh & South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee: Finalised Constitution, 26 March 2007

Report to ELSPJLC, Structure Plan Annual Housing Monitor, 26 March 2007

Letter from Scottish Executive to East Lothian Council, 23 March 2007: "Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan Review 2020 – Request for Approval of Abandonment"

Constitution of Interim Edinburgh & South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee

APPENDIX 1

