

Edinburgh and Lothians
STRUCTURE PLAN
Joint Liaison Committee



STRUCTURE PLAN ACTION PLAN REVIEW

Report by the Director of City Development, City of Edinburgh Council

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Committee agreed the Structure Plan Review Project Brief 2005 – 2008 on July 25 2005. An Updated Action Plan was identified as a Stage 1 project output, to be prepared by December 2005. The Action Plan has now been updated and is appended (Appendix 1). This report identifies the main changes and highlights the extent to which lack of strategic infrastructure investment is constraining the delivery of the Structure Plan development strategy.

2 Main Changes to Action Plan

- 2.1 This is the first full review of the Action Plan (AP) since the original was published in March 2003 and an interim Update produced in March 2004. It is titled "Action Plan 2" to clearly distinguish it from those earlier exercises.
- 2.2 The main narrative of the Action Plan has been updated to reflect the progress on the ground with key schemes and highlight strategic delivery problems. The section covering local plan progress has been updated and shows that delays in local plan preparation have affected each council. The key reason for the delays is the new requirement for councils to carry out Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA) of local plans as a result of the new environmental assessment regulations. A reference has been added to the text to indicate the requirements of these assessments and their implications for local plan preparation. Although slippage has been kept to a minimum, the Finalised Midlothian Local Plan is now programmed for Spring 2006 rather than December 2005 due to the need to prepare an environmental assessment and consult on it alongside the Local Plan. It is clear that CEC's Edinburgh City Local Plan will also not be able to be finalised within 18 months of Structure Plan approval as a result of the new SEA requirements.
- 2.3 With regard to transport issues, the A P narrative has been altered to highlight the successes in delivering the Structure Plan strategy, for example Ingliston/Hermiston Park and Ride sites and Edinburgh Park rail station, as well as continuing difficulties in delivering strategic infrastructure. These

include the need to identify alternative sources of funding following the decision not to proceed with a congestion charging scheme, and capacity limitations at Sheriffhall roundabout on the A720 City Bypass. In order to highlight latest developments affecting the airport, a reference to the Government's "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper and BAA Edinburgh's Consultation Draft Airport Master Plan has also been added.

- 2.4 The Water and Drainage section of the AP has been updated to indicate that a study has been commissioned to identify potential capacity constraints associated with the Eastern Interceptor Sewer; depending on the extent of these constraints, there may be have implications for the Structure Plan development strategy. The AP also now highlights that there is a need for a strategic solution to this potential capacity problem.
- 2.5 In the Education section a reference has been added to the cross-boundary funding of a new denominational secondary school in West Lothian through developer contributions from housing development in the Newbridge/Kirkliston/Ratho core development area. The new text also points out that appropriate mechanisms to ensure satisfactory legal implementation will be required.
- 2.6 On affordable housing, the AP notes recently amended Government policy and advice on the matter. The text now states that City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council are updating their local plan policies in light of this new guidance. In addition, updated references to West Lothian and East Lothian Council's approving affordable housing policies as supplementary planning guidance have been included. A reference has also been made to the recently published Lothianwide Housing Needs Assessment and its role in informing individual Council's Local Housing Strategies and planning policies.

Schedule 1 Changes

- 2.7 Schedule 1 which sets out the indicative programme for local plan adoption has had some minor updates. The main changes are the two new columns "Slippage" and "Key Comments/Issues & Resolution". The purpose of these new columns is to highlight any delays in local plan progress and the reasons for the delays.

Schedule 2 Changes

- 2.8 The second Schedule, which sets out strategic transport investment proposals, has been extensively updated. The main changes relate to the Identified/Possible Funding Sources or Responsibilities column, in particular the loss of congestion charging revenue as a possible funding source for transport schemes. As a result of this change there are a number of schemes that have no current funding source. In addition, two new columns have been added to the schedule: 2005 Timing and Issues/Implications/Actions. These highlight any delays and note their implications. One significant change to the new timing column is the revised timescale for short, medium and long term timing. These have been brought forward by two years, to reflect time that has passed in terms of the delivery of the Structure Plan strategy.

Schedule 3 Changes

- 2.9 Schedule 3 sets out the Key Development-Related Actions and Investments and has been updated to reflect progress over the last 2 years. As Schedule 2, new Timing Review and Progress columns have been added to highlight progress and identify any slippage in infrastructure delivery.

Appendix 1 Changes

- 2.10 This appendix sets out the Key Implementation Policies to be Actioned Through Local Plans and is largely unchanged but a new column has been added setting out progress by each of the councils in bringing forward their local plans.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The Action Plan review has shown that implementation of the Structure Plan development strategy, and in particular the delivery of many of the strategic housing allocations, is likely to be impeded by infrastructure constraints. A particular problem is constrained capacity in the existing water and sewerage network due to a lack of investment by Scottish Water. Road network capacity constraints, caused by a lack of investment in transport infrastructure, is also a major issue, compounded by the Trunk Road Network Management Division's continuing resistance to development likely to increase traffic levels on the trunk road network. Although studies and modelling exercises are underway to establish the impact of the development strategy on the road network it is not clear at this stage what the impact will be or whether the TRNMD will accept the effects of these developments on the network. In addition, the lack of transport infrastructure investment has been significantly affected by the decision not to proceed with a congestion charging scheme resulting in less available funding options. The implications of these problems are also discussed further in the Structure Plan Review 2020 Consultation Paper, the subject of a separate report to this meeting.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Action Plan 2 sets out the latest developments and changes on the ground since the original AP was published in March 2003. Although there have been notable implementation successes, particularly some key transport schemes, there are still a number of serious ongoing and emerging problems caused by lack of investment in crucial enabling infrastructure. The AP now brings these issues into sharp focus and highlights their effect on the ability of the Lothian authorities to implement the Structure Plan strategy.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) notes the preparation of Action Plan 2 and agrees to publish the amended document; and
 - b) notes that the ELSP development strategy is being severely constrained by lack of strategic investment by infrastructure providers in crucial enabling schemes.