

Edinburgh and Lothians
STRUCTURE PLAN
Joint Liaison Committee



STRUCTURE PLAN REVIEW 2020: CONSULTATION PAPER

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

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1 Background

- 1.1 A report on the Structure Plan Review Project Brief was considered by the Committee on July 25 2005. Committee agreed *inter alia* to undertake a statutory Structure Plan Review to 2020 and a complementary non-statutory City Region Spatial Vision to 2040 and to approve the proposed project brief and governance arrangements. Officers were authorised to seek the support and involvement of neighbouring councils, SEDD, SESTRAN and Scottish Enterprise in progressing the project. Committee also noted that a strategic options paper was to be presented for approval in December, to be followed by public consultation early in 2006.
- 1.2 The project also includes preparing the first whole plan monitoring report and updating the Action Plan. Separate reports to this meeting cover progress on these exercises. The findings of the housing monitoring report in particular have informed the work on the SPR.

2 Progress on the Structure Plan Review (SPR) 2020

- 2.1 Good progress has been made by the Lothian authorities on establishing the scope and content of the Structure Plan Review and an SPR 2020 draft consultation paper has been prepared for approval as a basis for public consultation (Appendix 1). It discusses options for reviewing the plan and poses a series of questions. Informed by the monitoring work, it suggests the plan's basic strategy is still fit for purpose but a limited alteration should be undertaken to roll the strategy forward to 2020.
- 2.2 The topics suggested for the alteration are housing land supply, infrastructure, affordable housing and aspects of retail policy. The paper notes that the alteration is intended to be an interim update of the existing strategy which by restricting its time horizon would not unduly limit the options for the next phases of city-region strategic planning.

Housing Land

- 2.3 The assessment of the housing land requirement for the period 2004 to 2020 indicates that just over 78,000 new homes will be needed. This is lower than might have been expected, due mainly to using the GRO's latest, 2002-based, household projections. These are significantly lower than those used for the ELSP. For the first time the calculation of the land requirement also builds in an allowance for a backlog of unmet housing need, derived from the recently completed Lothianwide Housing Needs assessment.
- 2.4 A technical supporting document has been prepared to accompany the consultation paper (Appendix 2 - Housing Background Paper). It provides statistical background information on the new housing land requirement and land supply, and shows the distribution and composition of the known housing land supply to 2020 across the plan area. The paper maps the known supply which indicates that it is spread reasonably evenly across the plan area. There are large sources of land in the city itself (Eg Waterfront, Leith Docks), close to its edge which are capable of delivering traditional family housing (Newbridge/Kirkliston, Shawfair, Musselburgh), and in the landward areas (West Lothian, Gorebridge, Haddington and the west sector of East Lothian). The paper also confirms that across the Lothians there is a good mix of brownfield and greenfield sites which should be able to cater for the demand for flats, other formats of urban family accommodation and lower density family housing. The paper can be read in conjunction with the Housing Monitoring Report, reported separately to this meeting
- 2.5 The conclusion is that there is enough land in the aggregate in the planning pipeline to meet a range of growth scenarios without the need for new strategic allocations. In addition to looking at overall numbers, housing sites in the pipeline are geographically well spread and represent a good range and choice of locations across the Lothians market area. It was therefore concluded that there appears to be no strategic requirement to identify additional land for housing development before 2020 - existing sources of supply, including a healthy effective land supply, can sustainably support high levels of growth and will challenge the building industry to deliver higher annual build rates than previously achieved in the region.

Infrastructure

- 2.6 The paper notes the disappointing delay in securing the commitment of infrastructure providers to major schemes necessary to implement the development strategy. These constraints on strategic infrastructure delivery are holding back regional growth. The main constraints and the schemes they are delaying are listed in the paper.

Affordable housing

- 2.7 Although there appears to be adequate amounts of land in the pipeline across the Lothians to meet the full range of housing needs, the distribution of this land does not necessarily match the distribution of affordable housing needs. The paper therefore raises the key strategic issue of whether the need for affordable housing should be met in whole or in part in the authority in which it arises, or whether a Lothianwide solution is possible or desirable in the same way private sector needs are planned across the whole housing market area. Consultees are asked to consider whether the principal affordable housing policy and percentage should be a matter for the structure plan, with local plans dealing with detailed matters of local implementation.

Retail Policy

- 2.8 Monitoring shows that the structure plan area is now much more self-contained for shopping. Much of the new provision has however been consented outwith town centres. The city centre in particular needs new investment and development to underpin its structure plan role and compete with other regional centres. Questions invite responses on the continuing usefulness of identifying a hierarchy of centres, the need to better define the regional and sub-regional centre, and how best to secure town centres' long term health.

- 2.9 A separate report to this meeting also deals with retailing; it introduces the Edinburgh Area Retail Needs Study (EARNs) and considers its implications for Structure Plan policy.

3 Progress on City Region Spatial Vision 2040(CRSV)

- 3.1 Progress on an agreed longer-term 2040 exercise has proved harder to achieve for the following reasons.
- 3.2 Timing: representatives from the neighbouring councils have attended the various project groups but both are undertaking substantial local and structure plan programmes and are not able to commit to the vision exercise at this time, and to the challenging timescale set. They also query the need to undertake this long-term work now to such a tight timescale, ahead of the planning bill which is expected to confirm which councils will be required to collaborate, identify joint working requirements and set a timetable for the introduction of city region planning.
- 3.3 Governance: officers from Fife and Borders Councils, while confirming their authorities' willingness to work with the Lothians councils to pave the way for future city region working, emphasise the need to put the political structures and joint project management arrangements in place before commencing substantive work on developing a city region vision.
- 3.4 City region visioning requires significant staff time and all partners, including the Lothian councils, are currently heavily engaged in local plan and/or structure plan processes which has made resourcing this exercise difficult. The project brief recognised staff time constraints in face of competing priorities as a potentially significant risk to project delivery.
- 3.5 It has not therefore been possible to develop an agreed draft 2040 spatial vision to the timescale envisaged. However, the 2020 paper includes a substantial "Looking Forward" section that invites views on what kind of city region we should plan to be in 2040 and its long term size and shape. It stresses the need to look beyond current constraints and set a strategic framework for the long term. It considers the pros and cons of the cases for higher and lower levels of growth and invites views on where any potential long term growth could most sustainably go. For example, concentrated around the city region core or dispersed across the wider city region.
- 3.6 Within the overall context of the consultation paper, individual councils may wish to inform the debate by separately publishing their own ideas on potential spatial options and the environmental costs and benefits associated with particular urban forms and settlement strategies.

4 Project Partners & Governance

- 4.1 Representatives from SEDD, Scottish Enterprise (SE) and SESTRAN sit on the project steering group. This has helped tie the work into SE's developing "Metropolitan Edinburgh" work and the new Regional Transport Strategy.
- 4.2 It is expected that the Planning Bill will be published shortly and should clarify aspects of statutory strategic planning joint working and clearly identify the authorities required to collaborate on a new Strategic Development Plan for the Edinburgh city region. Options for political and technical joint working structures and governance arrangements can then be developed by officers from each of the prospective partner councils. Subject to agreement with partner councils, a report could then be presented to the Committee and the relevant decision-making forums of the new partner authorities. Interim arrangements may need to be put in place to deal with the transition period before the statutory joint working requirement is introduced.

5 Communication and Consultation Strategy

- 5.1 Work is underway on developing a Lothianwide co-ordinated SPR 2020 consultation strategy designed to engage the public, local groups, infrastructure providers and commercial interests. Details will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) approves the Structure Plan Review 2020 consultation paper as the basis for public consultation in the first quarter of 2006;
- b) authorises the project Steering Group to make any necessary non-material editing and presentational changes to the paper prior to consultation; and
- d) notes that, subject to agreement of neighbouring partner councils, it is the intention to present at the appropriate time a report to the Committee on options for political and technical governance structures to manage the new statutory city region joint planning arrangements.