

**Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESplan); Proposed Plan****Report by Ian Johnson, Head of Communities and Economy****1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** Further to the report on SESplan to Council on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016, and the seminar for Members held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016, this report provides an update on issues raised in respect of infrastructure to serve and support development in Midlothian. It then recommends ratification by the Council of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1** At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2016 Council considered a report on, and a recommendation to ratify the Proposed Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland. A copy of that report is attached at Appendix A to this report. Having considered the report the Council decided to delay any decisions on ratification until Members had received the opportunity at a seminar to discuss matters relating to pressures on infrastructure in Midlothian. A note of the Member Seminar, held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 is attached at Appendix B to this report.

**3.0 Further Information on Infrastructure****3.1 General Practice and Health Care Provision**

Arising from further consultation, the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Programme Manager, has provided the following information.

*“General Practice is under considerable pressure from a combination of factors. The ageing population coupled with initiatives to move care from hospital into community is making the work more complex and more intense. The pressure experienced from the increase in demand and an increase in expectation from the public is compounded by restrictions in the available workforce meaning that practices are finding it more difficult to recruit staff. In Midlothian five practices have applied restrictions to new patients registering with the practice in an attempt to manage demand.*

*The extent of new house building planned in Midlothian means that the current capacity of General Practice cannot absorb the expected growth but the planned additions to practices will address the current pressure experienced by practices and will accommodate population growth for several years. To reduce the pressure the Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership will open a new practice in Newtongrange in Summer 2017 which has the capacity for up to 5,000 patients. It is expected that many people living in and near to Newtongrange will transfer to the new practice.*

*This will reduce demand on all the practices with restricted lists and absorb the growth from the new house building in Bonnyrigg and along the A7 corridor for around five years depending on the rate of house-building. To respond to the forecast population growth in the Shawfair Strategic Development Area the Danderhall Medical Practice will expand to accommodate 3000 new patients and around 2023 a new practice will open in Shawfair town centre. These developments form part of the Midlothian Primary Care Strategy that is under development by the Health and Social Care Partnership and will also identify action to accommodate the remaining predicted growth from house building in Midlothian.”*

### **3.2 Education Provision**

In response to matters raised at the seminar on 30<sup>th</sup> August and arising from further consultation the Council's Head of Education has provided the following information.

*“In response to the significant growth in pupil population in Midlothian, the Education Service, Property Services and Planning are working closely together in order to ensure that there is an ongoing strategic plan for the school estate which spans to 2050 which will deliver on our commitment to create a world-class education provision in Midlothian. There have been two main reports to Council in December 2014 and December 2015 which outline our progress thus far. This month we launched the information consultation on the A701 corridor, and will also commence the denominational school review. We are confident that we have a clear strategic direction and implementation plan in order to ensure a high level of provision for our growing pupil population, we are ambitious for the future and have been working with international experts to help guide our decision making to fit our unique local context”.*

### **3.3 Affordable Housing Provision**

Pressure for more affordable housing to meet demand is evident across the whole region of South East Scotland. This is evidenced through the detailed assessment (Housing Need and Demand Assessment) undertaken as part of the preparation of the Strategic Development Plan, and the resultant policies in the Plan to maximise the provision of additional affordable housing across the region. It is also expected that a key part of a successful bid for City Deal status for the Edinburgh City Region would see a major injection of funding to increase the amount and accelerate the delivery of new affordable housing. Within Midlothian the relevant provisions of the current and emerging local development plans ensure that a proportion of all housing development sites include affordable housing. In a minority of cases developers of housing sites may pay commuted sums in lieu of onsite provision. That money can then be used by the Council to assist in funding its own programme of affordable housing. A report on the further planned phases of that programme is elsewhere on this agenda.

### **3.4 Borders Rail Line: Capacity and Punctuality**

In recent correspondence the Managing Director of ScotRail Alliance has advised that in the period to March 2019 there will be a substantial increase in the train fleet across Scotland. For the Borders line this will result in an increase from two to three cars, and from four to six cars, with this work expected to be completed in 2018. ScotRail also have specific plans to improve punctuality and have offered to meet with Council officers to explain to them in more detail.

### **3.5 Transport (Trunk Roads)**

The Scottish Ministers are responsible for the trunk road network and this is delivered by Transport Scotland. The proposals and programming for major new infrastructure is set out in Transport Scotland's "Strategic Transport Projects Review". The current edition of that Review does not include a specific proposal to improve the A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout. However, in recent correspondence with Transport Scotland, it has confirmed that the Scottish Government remains committed to undertaking improvements at Sheriffhall junction and is continuing to progress the options assessment to identify a preferred option for a grade separated junction. Opportunity for public comment on options is expected later this year. In respect of the A702 trunk road Transport Scotland have been fully consulted and involved in work undertaken by the Council to examine the most appropriate interventions to ensure new development in the A701/A702 corridor can be most effectively served by road and public transport. In pursuing both the A720 and A702 improvements the role of the Strategic Development Plan, the Midlothian Local Development Plan and, by extension, the City Deal proposal are particularly significant. Transport Scotland is currently undertaking work across Scotland to look at how cross-Council boundary transport infrastructure issues can be addressed; with publication of the report due later this year/early 2017. It is expected that the report will make particular reference to the way in which developer contributions can be co-ordinated to assist funding of cross-boundary projects. In this respect the proposals in the Strategic Development Plan for a regional-wide approach to secure developer contributions towards regional infrastructure in South East Scotland are particularly relevant, and will gain greater force once the Proposed Plan has been ratified by all SESplan constituent Councils.

### **3.6 Transport (Local Roads)**

Local roads in Midlothian are the responsibility of Midlothian Council as the local roads authority. The general increase in road traffic, without factoring in new development, may give rise to the need for specific interventions, and those can be considered as part of the Council's normal revenue and/or capital programme. Where it is assessed that new development will add to traffic loading on the local road networks, then developer contributions are sought through the local development plan and supplementary guidance, and secured through legal planning agreements attached to planning permissions.

### **3.7 Transport (Bus Services)**

Decisions on the routes and frequency of services are essentially a matter for the commercial bus companies. As major new development areas are built the companies will normally extend or provide new services as they can be regarded as commercially viable. There are instances where developers can subsidise particular bus services to service their developments until the scale of development becomes commercially viable; a recent example being the developer contributions towards public transport to serve the new Shawfair development area.

## **4.0 Other Policy Matters raised at the Members' Seminar**

### **4.1 Oil and Gas Extraction by Hydraulic Fracturing ("Fracking")**

Having regard to the potential risks to the environment of fracking the Scottish Government has placed a national moratorium on the issuing of any planning permissions for unconventional oil and gas development, including fracking. The Proposed Strategic Development Plan states:

*“Local Development Plans will identify coal, oil and gas reserves to support a diverse energy mix, giving sufficient weight to the avoidance of long term environmental imports and greenhouse gas emissions from their use.”*

The Proposed Midlothian Local Development Plan includes Policy MIN 3 which states:

*“Proposals for oil and gas extraction will not be permitted where they would have a significant adverse effect on communities, sensitive uses or the environment. Proposals will be addressed with reference to the Supplementary Guidance on Resource Extractions.”*

## **4.2 Rail Line between Penicuik and Edinburgh**

The essential issue to be addressed is to improve the opportunities for residents and others to move between Penicuik and Edinburgh by public transport. Currently the only public transport option is by bus and, despite the provision of bus only lanes, the congested nature of the A701 is such that the quality of service is diminishing as overall traffic levels increase. The proposed new A701 relief road linking the A701 City Bypass with the A703 road near Bilston will allow the current A701 road between its junction with the A703 and the A720 to become a public transport corridor, as well as a safe route for cyclist and pedestrians. However, there needs to be a more thorough appraisal of additional measures including potential tram extensions from the City, light rail, and heavy rail. In order to pursue this range of options it would be appropriate for this Council to formally approach the regional transport authority (SEStrans). It would also be worthwhile highlighting the options as a prospective part of the overall A701/A702/Easter Bush project which is confidently expected to be included in the bid for City Deal status and funding.

## **5.0 Strategic Development Plan: Action Programme**

**5.1** The Proposed Strategic Development Plan comprises a suite of documents; one of which is the Action Programme. This document sets out the key strategic actions needed to achieve the vision of the Strategic Development Plan. It is developed in consultation with the member councils, Scottish Government, key agencies and other public and private stakeholders. For each item in the Action Programme it provides information on the timescale, lead and partner organisations, costs and funding, and a note on progress; with the document updated every two years.

**5.2** The Action Programme does not guarantee full funding of projects. Its main advantage is to provide a collectively agreed list of regional and cross-boundary key projects which is a strongly focussed agenda for prioritising funding and delivery. At this particular time the currently drafted Action Programme is a significant part of the region's bid for City Deal status and funding.

**5.3** Many of the projects listed in the Action Programme have either direct or indirect relevance and benefit to Midlothian. Those with direct benefit are:

- A701 and A702 Improvements
- Strategic Walking and Cycling Route, Edinburgh to Penicuik
- Strategic Walking and Cycling Route, Edinburgh to Gorebridge
- Park and Ride site at A68/A720 junction (North)
- A720 Improvements including Sheriffhall junction
- Edinburgh Orbital Bus and associated Park and Ride

Amongst those projects which would provide indirect benefit to Midlothian, the more significant are:

- Edinburgh Airport Improvements
- Additional Freight Capacity on the Forth
- Cross-Boundary Transport Contributions Framework
- Edinburgh – Glasgow Rail Improvements
- East Coast Mainline Improvements

## **6.0 Benefits and Ratification**

**6.1** The other five constituent Councils of SESplan have now ratified the proposed Strategic Development Plan for publication and the remaining stages towards final approval by Scottish Ministers.

**6.2** Through ratification of the Proposed Plan at this time, the following benefits accrue to Midlothian and the region as a whole:

- a. Progress on preparation of the Strategic Development Plan will remain on track such that it can be concluded and approved within the five year statutory period for review and replacement of strategic development plans;
- b. By remaining on track the Strategic Development Plan will be able to maximise its prime objectives of increasing economic growth, meeting housing need in all tenures, promoting infrastructure investment, and securing environmental sustainability.
- c. By remaining on track the Strategic Development Plan will be able to fulfil its statutory function of being the strategic planning framework for the preparation of local development plans across the region.
- d. Ratification of the Proposed Plan also includes ratification of its accompanying Action Programme which can then be promoted as the collective approved list of projects for prioritising funding and delivery, and
- e. The Proposed Plan can also act as a strong unified regional statement of commitment and intent at this critical stage of application to the UK and Scottish Governments for City Deal status and funding for the Edinburgh City Region which covers all of the SESplan area.

## **7.0 Consequences of Delayed or Non Ratification**

**7.1** Further delay or, more seriously, failure to ratify the Proposed Strategic Development Plan, would have the following significantly adverse consequences:

- a. There would be a notable loss of strategic planning direction and impact for the South East Scotland region.
- b. This loss would be evidenced through reduced performance in fully meeting strategic objectives across the region for promoting economic growth, meeting housing need (including the affordable sector where demand is especially acute), securing essential infrastructure investment and delivery, and promoting environmental sustainability.

- c. Loss of impetus and progress in the preparation of the Plan would risk it becoming outdated and as a consequence, it would no longer form a relevant strategic framework for local development planning across the region.
- d. The absence of that up to date strategic planning framework would then jeopardise the adequacy of the housing land supply potentially in all parts of the region, leaving an opportunity for 'planning by appeal' on unplanned and unallocated sites, and potentially with sub-optimal or no developer contributions.
- e. With the preparation of the bid by the six Councils in South East Scotland to the UK and Scottish Governments for a City Deal for the Edinburgh City Region at a critical stage, a lack of an up to date strategic development plan to which all Councils are committed would represent a serious risk to the prospects of the bid being successful.

## **8.0 Report Implications**

### **8.1 Resources**

There are no direct resource implications arising from this Report, other than consequential impacts of non-ratification as noted above.

### **8.2 Risk**

The risks associated with delayed or non-ratification of the Proposed Plan are set out in Part 7 of this Report.

### **8.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Ratification of the Proposed Plan will promote objectives of economic growth, meeting housing need, and promoting environmental sustainability.

- ☐ Community safety
- ☒ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

### **8.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan**

The Proposed Plan provides the strategic planning context for local development planning which in turn seeks to contribute to the agenda of reducing inequalities in income, health and qualifications.

### **8.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

See paragraphs 8.3 and 8.4 above.

### **8.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Not relevant to this report.

## **8.7 Involving Communities and other Stakeholders**

SESplan Strategic Plan No. 2 has been the subject of extensive consultation at its Main Issues Report stage. Once ratified the Plan will go through a further stage of public notification.

## **8.8 Ensuring Equalities**

The Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan have been the subject of an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment, approved by the SESplan Joint Committee.

## **8.9 Supporting Sustainable Development**

The Strategic Development Plan is subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. An interim Environmental Report accompanied the Main Issues Report. An updated Environmental Report will accompany the Proposed Plan when formally published.

## **8.10 IT Issues**

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

## **9.0 Summary**

**9.1** The proposed Strategic Development Plan was approved by the SESplan Joint Committee on 20 June 2016. The governance arrangements of the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland require all of the member Councils to ratify the Plan before it can be formally published for a period of notification and receipt of representations.

**9.2** The provisions of the Proposed Plan in respect of housing do not require any new additional sites for housing development to be allocated in Midlothian; there being sufficient sites already allocated in existing and emerging local development plans to meet the requirement to 2029. Accordingly, whilst the issue of infrastructure pressures in Midlothian (and across the region) is significant, ratification of the Proposed Plan would not increase those pressures. Indeed, ratification of the Proposed Plan also ratifies the Action Programme which is an agenda for promoting delivery of major new infrastructure projects to the benefit of every part of the region. This is one of the benefits which would flow from ratification of the Proposed Plan. Conversely, further delay or failure to ratify would have significant adverse consequences.

## **10.0 Recommendation**

**10.1** It is recommended that Council ratifies the Proposed Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland.

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### **Background Papers:**

- SESplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan (September 2016) - previously issued to Members
- SESPLAN Action Programme (September 2016) – copies placed in the Members' Library