

Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESplan) Update

Report by Ian Johnson, Head of Planning and Development

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the Minutes of the Meeting of 29 June 2012 of the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESplan) Joint Committee and matters arising, and to update Members on progress towards approval of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan by Scottish Ministers. The SESplan Joint Committee Minutes are appended to this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 Submission of Proposed Strategic Development Plan to Scottish Ministers: At its meeting on 26 July 2011, the SESplan Joint Committee approved the Proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) with some amendments, and associated documents, for ratification by the six SESplan Member Councils. Midlothian Council ratified the Proposed SDP and supporting documents at its meeting on 23 August 2011. The Proposed Plan and supporting documents, including the Environmental Report and Action Programme, were published for formal representations over the period 7 November - 19 December 2011.
- 2.2 Representations received were grouped into 29 unresolved issues, each summarised and responded to in a proforma known as a 'Schedule 4', as required by the Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA). These Schedule 4s formed part of the Summary of Unresolved Representations submitted to Scottish Ministers alongside the Proposed Strategic Development Plan on 10 August 2012. The Schedule 4s are available on the DPEA website at: <http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?id=qA313854>.
- 2.3 DPEA has now appointed two Reporters - Mr Trevor Croft and Mr David Russell - to conduct an Examination into the representations and produce a report with any proposed modifications to the Proposed Plan. The Reporters have not yet indicated whether they intend to hold a public hearing as part of the Examination process. They have, however, confirmed that SESplan has complied with its published Participation Statement for the plan-making process and that the Examination commenced on 22 October 2012. DPEA has given notice of the arrangements through the placing of advertisements, including in the Midlothian Advertiser.
- 2.4 Although the timetable for receipt of the Reporters' findings and any proposed changes to the Plan remains uncertain, Scottish Government operates a 6-9 month target for this stage. The target date is 24 June 2013, but it is hoped that this date might be advanced, potentially to March 2013.

- 2.5** Ratification of Record of Habitats Regulations Appraisal: As part of the plan preparation process, Habitats Regulations Appraisal of the Proposed Plan has been undertaken, as required by statute. The purpose is to establish if the Proposed Plan could result in 'likely significant effects' for sites which form part of the Natura 2000 network (European Sites). None of the European Sites within Midlothian (Fala Flow and Gladhouse Reservoir Special Protection Areas and Peeswit Moss Special Area of Conservation) are affected by the Proposed Plan. However, each of the Member Councils is now required to ratify the Record of this Appraisal, a copy of which has been placed in the Members' library. DPEA will then be informed of this ratification.
- 2.6** Financial update: The Joint Committee noted the outturn figures for the SESplan 2011/12 operating budget which had been kept within the available budget.
- 2.7** Dates for future meetings: Although the Minutes indicate that the next meeting of the Joint Committee will be held on 3 December 2012 in Haddington, it is now expected that the business for this meeting will be transacted by e-mail.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report. The cost of the Examination (excluding travel, subsistence, hire of halls, etc.) is to be met equally by SESplan and Scottish Ministers. Assuming there is no unforeseen expenditure arising from the Examination, SESplan's share of the costs will be met from the agreed annual contributions from the Member Councils together with underspend for 2011/12 carried forward to the current financial year.

3.2 Risk

The budgetary allocation of £49,000 per Member Council should be sufficient to accommodate most reasonable costs arising. Failure to adequately resource the Examination could prejudice the interests of individual Member Councils as well as SESplan.

3.3 Policy

Strategy

The SDP for South East Scotland is a key strategic planning document and important for the delivery of the National Planning Framework for Scotland. It provides a strategic framework for the Midlothian Local Development Plan. It will contribute to the achievement of the following corporate objectives and service priorities:

Corporate Priorities 2012-13:

1: Supporting healthy, caring and diverse communities where local needs are met; 2: Maximising business opportunities; 4: Conserving and improving Midlothian's natural environment.

Planning and Development Service Priorities 2012-13:

- Prepare the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan in partnership with the five other partner Councils.

In terms of the Single Outcome Agreement, the preparation of the SDP will contribute to the following Local Outcomes:

- continue to improve Midlothian's growing economy;
- make Midlothian a more attractive place for doing business;
- promote inward investment and create quality and sustainable business locations;
- provide access to quality, affordable housing by delivering affordable homes for rent and sale;
- build Midlothian's resilience to climate change impacts; and
- safeguard and enhance the amenity of Midlothian.

Consultation

The SDP Main Issues Report and associated documents were subject to public consultation in line with the SESplan Development Plan Scheme Participation Statement. The Proposed Plan with supporting documents, including the Environmental Report and Action Programme, were published for representations (November-December 2011). The arrangements for the Examination are publicised through DPEA (formal advertisements and website) and the SESplan website.

Equalities

The SDP Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan were the subject of an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment, approved by the SESplan Joint Committee and ratified by the Member Councils.

Sustainability

The SDP is subject to Strategic Environment Assessment. An Interim Environmental Report accompanied the Main Issues Report and an Updated Environmental Report (and Addendum) accompanies the Proposed Plan. These have been approved by the SESplan Joint Committee and ratified by the Member Councils. The Proposed Plan is based upon a sustainable development strategy. Should the Reporters recommend significant changes to the Plan, a further update of the Environmental Report may be required.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) note the Minutes of 29 June 2012 of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Planning (SESplan) Joint Committee and matters arising;
- (b) note the arrangements and timetable for the Examination of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland; and
- (c) ratify the Record of Habitats Regulations Appraisal, including Appropriate Assessment, for the Proposed Strategic Development Plan.

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Background Papers:

SESplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan, November 2011

SESplan Action Programme, November 2011

SESplan Environmental Report, November 2011

SESplan Schedule 4s available at:

<http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?id=qA313854>