

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environment and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration Services)

Planning Committee: 4 September 2007

Subject: Strategic Development Planning Authorities

1 Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the publication of a consultation paper by the Scottish Executive on the proposed designation orders for the new Strategic Development Planning Authorities and to recommend this Council's response to it.

2 Background

- 2.1** The White Paper, Modernising the Planning System, published in June 2005, signalled Ministers' intentions to introduce strategic development plans and local development plans in Scotland which would replace the existing Structure and Local Plans. The White Paper proposed that while local development plans would cover the whole of Scotland, strategic development plans would only cover the four largest city regions around Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.
- 2.2** The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 provides for the removal of structure plans and the creation of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs). The Act gives Ministers powers to designate Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs), which are groups of planning authorities working together to prepare SDPs.
- 2.3** The draft designation orders set out the proposed groups of Councils that will comprise each SDPA. It is intended that they will provide a vital forum for Councils to jointly establish a common approach to land use planning matters that extend beyond an individual authority's boundaries. Housing markets, retail catchments, travel to work areas and access to services all operate on a wide geographical basis, particularly around the main city regions.

3 Main Issues

- 3.1** The principal role of strategic development planning authorities is to prepare Strategic Development Plans. Scottish Ministers want SDPs to be prepared and reviewed on a 5-yearly basis, so that plans can effectively lead and manage change. Strategic development planning authorities are therefore required to form a joint committee of members representing the constituent planning

authorities. This will then be serviced by a small dedicated team of officers with the support of Council planning staff. This model is based on the success of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Joint Committee.

- 3.2** An initial role for the new SDPAs will be to agree the boundary for the new Strategic Development Plan. For the Glasgow City Region, the Executive have suggested that the Councils that currently comprise the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan Committee should continue their joint working. Currently the existing Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan covers all of West Dunbartonshire, however the current consultation suggests that National parks should be excluded from Strategic Development Plan.
- 3.3** This proposal echoes the views previously expressed by this Council which considered that the inclusion of the National Park within the Strategic Development Plan would lead to a plethora of plans for the National Park area and could be confusing. It is therefore recommended that this Council support the proposal to exclude national parks from the SDPAs.
- 3.4** As with membership, equal contributions from each constituent authority will also apply to financial support for the SDPA. With the duty to prepare strategic development plans replacing an existing requirement to prepare structure plans the Scottish Executive consider the preparation of the SDP as not a wholly new function and anticipate a redistribution of resources rather than a requirement for significant additional spending. Whilst this is the case it must be pointed out that the SDPAs will be required to service and make financial contributions to ensure that a SDP is prepared timeously. Therefore there should be a recognition that this places a burden on these authorities. It is therefore recommended that this Council recommends that the Executive should also make a financial contribution towards the revenue costs of the dedicated SDP teams.
- 3.5** The Executive have posed several questions concerning the establishment of the new SDP and SDPAs, which are set out in Appendix A to this report. These questions follow on from the consultation on the modernising planning agenda, which this Council has previously responded to and raise no additional issues of concern

4 Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no known personnel issues at this stage.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1** The establishment of the Strategic Development Planning Authorities will require contributions from West Dunbartonshire Council. These should be similar in

scale to the current financial contribution for the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan Committee, which is included within the current budget.

6 Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no known risks.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The establishment of the new Strategic Development Plans is a further step in the modernising planning agenda. The establishment of a joint committee with equal membership and equal contributions is welcomed. Although the boundaries of the SDPA remain to be established it is considered at this stage that the Council makes clear its views that the National Park should not be included within the Strategic Development Plan area.

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- **Note that West Dunbartonshire Council will form part of the Glasgow City Region for the preparation of the new Strategic Development Planning;**
- **Agree that the part of West Dunbartonshire which lies within the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park should not form part of the Strategic Development Plan Area;**
- **Suggest that the Scottish Executive make a financial contribution towards the costs of the dedicated Strategic Development Planning Teams; and**
- **Submit Appendix A as this Council's response to the Consultation Paper**

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(Housing and Regeneration Services)**

Date: 17 August 2007

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Appendices : Questionnaire response on Designation Orders and statutory
Guidance of Strategic Development Planning Authorities

Background Papers : Modernising the Planning System White Paper 2005
Report to Planning Committee 7 September 2005 on
Modernising the Planning System
Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006

Wards Affected : All

Appendix 1

Q1: Do you support the proposed membership of the Strategic Development Planning Authorities and if not, why not?

For the Glasgow City Region the eight authorities that currently comprise the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan Committee are correctly proposed as members of the new Strategic Development Plan area.

Q2: Do you have any concerns about the proposed arrangements for joint committees?

Equal representation and voting rights for each Council represented on the new joint committee is welcomed. Using the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan Joint Committee as a model which has shown how Councils can undertake successful joint working in the area of strategic planning is also welcomed

Q3: Do you have any concerns about the proposed arrangements for the effective establishment of dedicated teams?

It is necessary that the staff within the dedicated teams have knowledge and expertise of strategic planning issues and this is supported by Council planning staff. It should be noted however that from experience within the Glasgow & the Clyde Valley Joint Structure Plan Joint Committee considerable strain can be placed upon smaller authorities at times due to their smaller staffing levels and their ability to service relevant topic groups over and above development planning work within their own authority. It is therefore vitally important that in managing both the SDP and the LDP, the dedicated teams and Councils formulate realistic and dovetailed timetables for the preparation of their plans.

Q4: What issues do you anticipate in agreeing plan boundaries?

It would be appropriate for the SDPAs to follow administrative boundaries as closely as possible. In the case of West Dunbartonshire it is recommended that the national park area is excluded from the SDPAs given the current level of National Park and Local Plans that exist.

Q5: Should funding for the SDPA be shared equally across the constituent authorities and if not, why not?

It is agreed that each Council should make equal contributions towards the establishment and running of the new SDP dedicated teams. Given that the authorities that are within each city region will have this burden placed on them whilst other Councils will not it is recommended that the Scottish Executive should also make some form of financial contribution.

Q6: What other issues would you like to see covered in the statutory guidance for SDPAs?

It appears all issues with regard to SDPAs are covered within the Consultation Paper. It is assumed that issues concerning the form and content of the SDPs themselves will be the subject of further consultation in due course.