

Interim Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Joint Committee

27 June 2008



REPORT ON PROPOSED STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN BOUNDARIES

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report proposes the way forward in relation to the requirement for the Strategic Development Planning Authority to establish the boundaries for its area for submission to Scottish Ministers.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scottish Government issued Planning Circular 2/2008 entitled 'Statutory Guidance on Strategic Development Planning Authorities' in April 2008. The circular relates to the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 that requires the replacement of structure plans by strategic development plans (SDPs). The Act also provides ministerial powers to designate Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs).
- 2.2 The Government views SDPAs as a vital forum for planning authorities to jointly establish a common approach to matters extending beyond an individual authority's boundaries. Housing markets, travel to work areas and access to services all operate on a large geographical basis particularly around the main city regions.
- 2.3 The Government makes it clear that the perceived absence of cross boundary issues in one part of an area does not mean that the boundary should be drawn to exclude it since the content of the SDP will be proportionate to the issues being addressed. Consequently, the Government considers that the matching of the SDPA to local authority boundaries would be the simplest solution, still allowing for the focus of the plan content to be on the issues and areas with the greatest cross-boundary implications. The boundaries should be clear and precise to meet the needs of the development management process, and to enable a sensible approach towards Local Development Plans.

- 2.4 On the commencement of designation orders, the first role of the new SDPAs will be to agree boundaries for the SDPA. The designation orders are expected to come into force on 25 June 2008. The Act requires each SDPA to submit a proposed boundary to Scottish Ministers within 3 months of its designation i.e. by 25 September 2008. It is proposed to submit a report to the SDPA Committee in August 2008 setting out a boundary plan along with an appropriate justification. On submission of the proposed boundary by the SDPA, Scottish Ministers require a period to consider their response.
- 2.5 Each authority has now determined its preferred approach to defining the SDP boundary for its area. In the case of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Councils, it is likely that the proposed boundary should include the whole local authority area. In the case of Fife, a report on the SDPA is to be considered by Fife's Planning Committee on 17 June 2008. The report recommends that the area to the south of the Kirkcaldy and Mid Fife and the St Andrews and East Fife local plan boundary be included within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland SDPA area. The area to the north of this boundary is proposed to be included in the Dundee SDPA.
- 2.6 Circular 2/2008 suggests that the new SDPA should adopt a transparent approach and engage with relevant interests. The 3 month deadline for submission to Scottish Ministers provides limited opportunity to prepare a report on the proposed boundaries and to engage with relevant interests. It is therefore proposed that the SDPA, through its member authorities, and as they deem appropriate, engage principally with organisations involved in Community Planning within each of the constituent local authority areas to gauge their views on the most appropriate boundary for the SDPA in relation to their own operational requirements. This process has already been undertaken by Fife Council on its own internal city region boundary options.
- 2.7 Consultation with key stakeholders, including Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Water and Scottish Environment Protection Agency is proposed to be undertaken by a constituent member council on behalf of the new SDPA.
- 2.8 Whilst the Government anticipates agreement between the constituent local authorities on the boundary, it should be noted that there is provision for the submission of an alternative by a member Council to Scottish Ministers.
- 2.9 Scottish Ministers will, following submission of proposals, give a decision on the SDPA boundaries and explain any proposed alterations.

SUMMARY

- 2.10 The SDPA is required to define a boundary within 3 months of designation. It is required to engage with relevant interests on its boundary proposals prior to submission to Scottish Ministers. It is proposed to recommend to constituent councils that the engagement by the SDPA on each Council's boundary preferences should principally be with the Community Planning organisations, and that the individual councils comprising the new SDPA undertake this within their own area as appropriate. In addition, consultation will be undertaken with relevant key stakeholders by a constituent member council on behalf of the new SDPA.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees

- (i) that consultation should be undertaken on the basis of the boundary preferences set out in paragraph 2.5 of this report**
- (ii) to recommend to constituent councils that the engagement on the boundary for the Strategic Development Plan Area should be undertaken principally through consultation with the relevant Community Planning Partnership organizations**
- (iii) that a report on the preferred boundary is prepared for the meeting of the SDPA in August 2008.**