

**ABERDEEN
CITY AND
SHIRE**

*Strategic Development
Planning Authority*

Planning Performance Report | 2015-16

July 2016

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aberdeen City and Shire is a growing and economically dynamic city region with high quality environmental assets and exceptional quality of life. The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA), in partnership with others, has a key role in shaping the future development of the area.

1.2 Aberdeen City and Shire is one of four city-regions in Scotland and is made up of the areas of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. However, the area covered by the strategic development plan (SDP) excludes that part of Aberdeenshire within the Cairngorms National Park (Figure 1).

1.3 This is the sixth annual report of the SDPA since its formation in 2008. This report covers the year to 31 March 2016 and incorporates the authority's 'Planning Performance Report'. The SDPA's audited accounts for 2015/16 will be published separately.

1.4 This year the workload of the SDPA has largely focused on implementation and infrastructure provision, as well as the planning review initiated by Scottish Ministers at the start of the year. In the latter part of the year work started in preparation for the next strategic development plan.

1.5 This report provides the opportunity to both review the achievements of the past year and look forward to the year ahead. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the SDPA, while section 3 provides a description of the area. Section 4 gives an overview of the activity of the SDPA over the last year. Section 5 covers the National Headline Indicators, while section 6 presents information to demonstrate the performance of the SDPA against a defined set of themes. Section 7 looks forward to the year ahead and identifies the service improvement commitments identified, while the final section of the report provides references for supporting evidence. Appendices are provided as appropriate to present more detailed information.

1.6 All 32 local planning authorities, 4 strategic development planning authorities and 2 national park authorities in Scotland are preparing performance reports in a common format. Due to the particular function of the SDPAs, their reports are more limited in scope. This report has been prepared in accordance with the March 2016 version of the guidance for Planning Performance Frameworks.

Figure 1: Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan Area



2. Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority

2.1 The SDPA was established in 2008 through the implementation of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, meeting for the first time on 18 September 2008. The SDPA's initial task was to take a structure plan forward to approval by Scottish Ministers, taking over this role from the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Planning Committee. Due to the need to replace the structure plan, work had started in 2007 and was completed before starting work on a strategic development plan.

2.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers without modification in August 2009 and was commended at that year's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning. A replacement strategic development plan has now also been prepared and was approved by Scottish Ministers on 28 March 2014. Well in advance of the five year deadline.

2.3 The SDPA is made up of 12 Councillors, six from Aberdeen City Council and six from Aberdeenshire Council (Appendix 1). It is currently chaired by Councillor Peter Argyle (Aberdeenshire Council) who took up the role in January 2015 after being the Vice Chair for the previous 2½ years. Councillor Ramsay Milne (Aberdeen City Council) was elected as Vice Chair after being the Chair for the previous 2½ years.

2.4 The Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of Aberdeen City Council and the Infrastructure Services Committee of Aberdeenshire Council are the two committees with a development plan remit, while the six Area Committees of Aberdeenshire Council also have a consultative role. However, the approval of the proposed Strategic Development Plan is done by Full Council in both councils.

2.5 The SDPA meet at least quarterly to conduct its business, although it can meet more often if necessitated by workload and project timescales. The work of the SDPA is supported by a small dedicated officer team.

2.6 More details are provided in section 4 in relation to the year just passed and section 7 in relation to the year to come.



Cllr P Argyle (Chair)



Cllr R Milne (Vice Chair)

3. The City Region

3.1 Aberdeen City and Shire is a large city region in the north east of Scotland, occupying around 6% of the landmass of Scotland and accounting for around 9% of its population and households. The City of Aberdeen is at the heart of the region, with Aberdeenshire forming a large and varied hinterland. The North Sea to the north and east provides an important setting to the region as well as critical resources for its continuing prosperity.

3.2 The area is characterised by high employment, low unemployment, high wages and a high growth rate over the last few years. The area's economy has seen the fastest rising productivity of any part of the UK since 2004 and the economy has grown twice as fast as the rest of Scotland since the recession in 2007.

3.3 Aberdeen City and Shire is projected to be the fastest growing part of Scotland over the next 25 years. The SDP has a key role to play in promoting, facilitating and managing that growth. However, the fall in the price of oil during 2014/15 and into 2015/16 is likely to have significant impacts on the local (and national) economy over the next few years which are only starting to be felt.

3.4 Figure 2 below provides some summary statistics which paint a picture of the area.

Figure 2: City-Region Statistics

| | Aberdeen City & Shire | Scotland |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Geographical Area* | 5,050 sq km (6%) | 77,933 sq km |
| Households* (2015) | 213,467 (+ 0.6%) ↑ | 2,433,956 (+ 0.6%) ↑ |
| Population* (2015) | 489,210 (+ 0.6%) ↑ | 5,373,000 (+ 0.5%) ↑ |
| Jobs (2014) | 323,000 (+ 7.3%) ↑ | 2,762,000 (+ 4.5%) ↑ |
| Unemployment (March 2016) | 5,635 (1.7%) ↑ | 72,565 (2.6%) ↓ |
| New Housebuilding (2015) | 2,093 (13%) ↑ | 15,954 ↑ |
| Vacant & Derelict Land (2015) | 107ha (1%) ↓ | 12,674ha ↑ |
| Carbon Emissions 2014 (per capita) | 6.1 tonnes CO ₂ (-0.6 tonnes) ↓ | 5.7 tonnes CO ₂ (-0.9) ↓ |
| Average House Price (2015/16) | £220,441 (-2.2%) ↓ | £166,540 (-0.5%) ↓ |
| Gross Value Added per head (2014) | £37,460 (+ 2.9%) ↑ | £23,102 (+ 4.2%) ↑ |



The price of oil fell by **34%** during 2015/16, ending the year at just \$37 per barrel. Over 2 years the price fell by 65% from \$106. This has had a significant impact on the local economy.

62%

Economic output per head is second in the UK...**62%** higher than the Scottish average.



Aberdeen City and Shire accounted for **9%** of the Scottish population and households in 2015.



Aberdeen City and Shire has a **fully up-to-date** development plan at both strategic and local levels.



Aberdeen City and Shire accounted for **13%** of all new homes built in Scotland during 2015.



Over **£200m** (210,000 tonnes) of seafood were landed between Peterhead and Fraserburgh in 2014

4. SDPA activity during 2015/16

4.1 While the implementation of the SDP and issues around infrastructure provision have been the main focus of activity for the SDPA during the year, a range of other activities have also been carried out and these are summarised below.

Strategic Development Plan

4.2 The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers on 28 March 2014. The SDP was the last of the four plans across Scotland to be approved due to the approval of the previous structure plan in August 2009. However, the SDP was approved less than 5 years after the previous plan, maintaining the fully up-to-date development plan coverage of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, an achievement the area is rightly proud of. This enabled a plan-led approach to the significant development pressures being experienced at a time of significant economic growth, particularly the rapidly expanding commercial floor space requirements of the Oil and Gas industry.

4.3 During the past year, attention was focused on finalising the supplementary guidance on the Strategic Transport Fund and the subsequent legal challenge to its adoption. Following consultation between December 2015 and February 2016, the proposed supplementary guidance was submitted to Scottish Ministers for scrutiny. Following one minor amendment the guidance was adopted in June 2015.

4.4 However, the Elswick Development Company Ltd submitted a legal challenge to the adoption of the guidance at the Court of Session, with a hearing taking place in early March 2016. The court issued its judgement in late April 2016 sustaining the appeal and quashing the guidance. However, leave to appeal has since been sought from the court and the legal process and consequent financial and workload pressure is likely to extend well into 2016/17 and potentially beyond.

4.5 The SDP is a robust and visionary plan for the future development of the area, identifying the need for a significant increase in historic levels of housing and commercial development as well as the infrastructure required to deliver it. While the take-up of employment land over recent years has been unprecedented, levels are now much more subdued following the fall in the price of oil. When developments currently underway are completed there will be a very considerable supply of office and industrial floorspace available. House building is only now returning to pre-recession levels, with 2015 completions just 20 units short of the level reached in 2007. However, Aberdeen City and Shire is the only city region to achieve this, with the rest of the country still lagging well below pre-recession averages.



4.6 Figure 3 demonstrates the potential impact of the plan on anticipated house completions over the next few years compared to the historical picture since 1981. These figures, agreed with the house building industry, predict levels of completions not seen for the last 30 years and remaining at this level for several years.

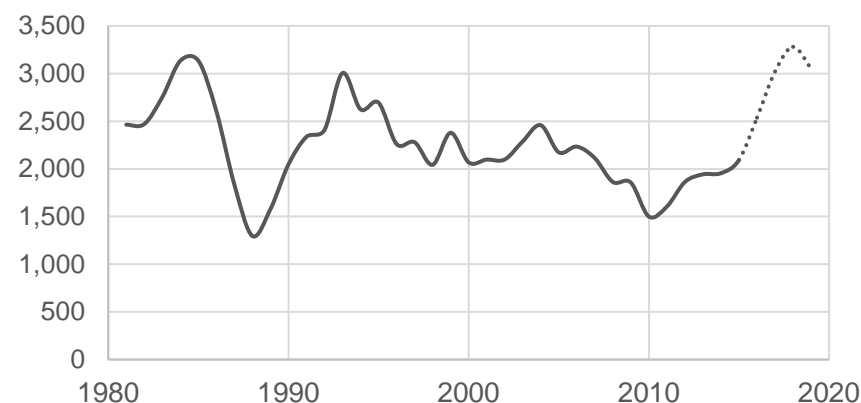
Consultation responses

4.7 The SDPA responded to a number of policy consultations during the year, ranging from the TAYplan Proposed Strategic Development Plan and Network Rail's Scotland Route Study to the Scottish Government's Planning Delivery Advice and the 'Independent Review of Planning' (see below). In addition to this, a wide range of responses were made to consultations on planning applications over the reporting period. The eight responses (and one appeal statement) ranged from electricity transmission and carbon capture infrastructure through to large-scale residential and retail developments. The SDPA also engaged with the two councils on the preparation of their Proposed LDPs and subsequent examinations.

Independent Review of Planning

4.8 The Scottish Government announced a review of planning in June 2015 and established an independent panel to conduct the review in September. The review was tasked with addressing six topics in particular, including development planning and house building. The SDPA wrote to the Cabinet Secretary following the initial announcement and invited the Chief Planner to a workshop with Members prior to the SDPA's September meeting. The SDPA submitted a response to the call for evidence and both the Chair and SDP Manager gave oral evidence to the panel in February 2016. The panel's report "Empowering planning to deliver great places" was published on 31 May 2016 and is likely to give rise to considerable work over the coming year (2016/2017), particularly given the recommendations it contains regarding planning and infrastructure provision at the city region scale as these would have a significant impact on the nature and function of the SDPA if implemented.

Figure 3: Actual and anticipated house completions since 1981 across Aberdeen City and Shire



Source: Housing Land Audit



Service Improvement Activities

4.9 The SDPA identified three service improvement commitments for 2015/16, delivering each of these as set out in Figure 4 below. Commitments for 2016/17 are identified in section 7 of this report.

Figure 4: Delivery of Service Improvement Commitments (2015/16)

| Service Improvement Commitments 2013/14 | Progress | Comment |
|---|----------|--|
| Conduct a 'Lessons Learnt' exercise to establish an action plan for improvements for the next SDP | ✓ | This included meetings with both LDP teams as well as engagement with councillors and the private sector. This will also be a topic for discussion on our online discussion forum opening in mid-2016 (which is itself one of the identified actions). |
| Carry out a customer survey to establish the value of E-updates and how they could be improved | ✓ | An online questionnaire was issued to all 150+ e-update recipients and was also made available on the SDPA website to capture those not currently in receipt of the e-update. Although the response was limited, it clearly established a continuing role for an improved e-update as well as use of social media, primarily twitter as a way of communicating with communities and stakeholders. Improvements were made during the year to the format of e-updates and further actions have been identified to implement the lessons learnt during 2016/17. Most significant among these will be the launching of an SDPA twitter account, with lessons being learnt by the other three SDPAs and other planning authorities on how best to make use of this tool. This will be launched prior to engagement on the new plan. |
| Review the Scheme of Delegation | ✓ | The Scheme of Delegation was agreed at the April 2015 meeting of the SDPA and subsequently amended in May 2016. |



Other activities

4.10 The SDPA continued to facilitate a range of proposals of strategic importance identified in the SDP, some of which have been designated as National Developments in National Planning Framework 3. These included the extension of Aberdeen Harbour, a carbon capture proposal at Peterhead, a potential electricity interconnector to Norway (NorthConnect), as well as various transport and electricity transmission projects.

4.11 The SDPA had a role in the preparatory work leading up to and out of the City Region Deal announced in January 2016, focusing in particular on the housing and transport themes. This work is likely to continue into 2016/17 in terms of implementation.

4.12 The four SDP Managers met several times during the year, with work focussing on the Scottish Government's planning review. Discussions also focused on the respective Planning Performance Frameworks and the identification of improvement activities which could be done jointly. The four teams met once during the year with a focus on sharing best practice (delivering strategic infrastructure, links to development management, infographics / easy read plan summaries and youth engagement) as well as city region deals.

4.13 The SDPA were represented on the Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) Development Plan Subcommittee during the year. The SDPA take it in turns with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to be represented (geographically) on the group for a two-year term, with Aberdeenshire Council taking over in June 2016. The representation of the four SDPA's is also on a rotating basis, with Clydeplan representing these interests for the next two years.

4.14 The SDPA has participated in a number of meetings and workshops throughout year looking to identify practical solutions to the challenges of housing land supply and infrastructure provision through the planning system. Although there is some way to go before a practical solution to these issues is identified and implemented, considerable progress has been made, finding expression in the Planning Delivery Advice in early 2016. Further impetus has been given to implementing these solutions by the planning review report. The SDPA also assisted the Scottish Government in the preparation of advice on taking net economic benefit into account in the planning system.



5. National Headline Indicators

5.1 This section reports on the Key Outcome measures identified within the National Headline Indicators which are relevant to the work of the SDPA.

Figure 5: National Headline Indicators

| Key Outcome | 2015/16 | 2014/15 | Comment |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Development Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months). | 2 yr 0 mths (at 31 March 2016) | 1 yrs 0 mths (at 31 March 2015) | The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers on 28 March 2014. This was well in advance of the 5 th anniversary of the previous structure plan on 19 August 2014. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) | Y | Y | The current development plan scheme anticipates that the current Strategic Development Plan will be replaced by its 5 th anniversary of 28 March 2019. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y/N) | N | N | The expected date of submission of the next Proposed Strategic Development Plan to Scottish Ministers remains March 2018. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were development plan scheme engagement / consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) | Y | Y | There were no engagement / consultation commitments given in the previous development plan scheme for 2015/16. |

| Key Outcome | 2015-2016 | 2014/15 | Comment |
|--|---|--|--|
| Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply (units) | AHMA = 33,821 RHMA = 13,084 SDP = 46,905 | AHMA= 34,731 RHMA= 13,569 SDP= 48,300 | Housing Land Audit Base Date = 1 January 2016. AHMA = Aberdeen Housing Market Area (whole of Aberdeen City and part of Aberdeenshire) RHMA = Rural Housing Market Area (the rest of Aberdeenshire but excluding the CNPA) SDP = Strategic Development Plan (AHMA + RHMA) Both housing market areas continue to evidence a healthy housing land supply, exceeding 5 years in both cases. A considerable quantity of land is programmed beyond year 5 (2021 onwards – 22,317 units) which will supplement the supply in years to come. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year Effective housing land supply (units) | AHMA = 11,250 RHMA = 3,510 SDP = 14,760 | AHMA= 12,091 RHMA= 3,686 SDP= 15,777 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year Housing Supply Target (units) | AHMA = 7,668 RHMA = 3,271 SDP = 10,939 | AHMA= 7,827 RHMA= 3,336 SDP= 11,163 | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year Effective housing land supply (years, to one decimal place) | AHMA= 7.3yrs RHMA= 5.4yrs SDP= 6.7yrs | AHMA= 7.7yrs RHMA= 5.5yrs SDP= 7.1yrs | A site for 3,000 homes received consent on 1 April 2016 (outside the accounting period) and will be reflected in the 2016/17 report. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> housing approvals | AHMA= 3,451 RHMA= 1,027 SDP= 4,478 | SDP= 8,459 | Housing approvals figures cover the financial year 2015/16, all other housing data is for the calendar year 2015 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing completions in last 5 years (units) | AHMA= 6,994 RHMA= 2,465 SDP= 9,459 | AHMA= 6,300 RHMA= 2,566 SDP= 8,866 | Annual housing completions across the SDP area have increased every year since 2010 (increasing by 40% since then). The level of completions over the last five years increased by 6.7% on last year's total. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketable employment land supply (Ha) | SDP= 510ha | SDP= 500Ha | Employment Land Audit Base Date = 1 April 2015 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment land take-up (Ha) | SDP= 32ha | SDP= 32Ha | A further 44Ha of employment land was under construction at the base date of the Audit. |

6. Defining and measuring a high quality planning service

6.1 A high-quality planning service is vital to Aberdeen City and Shire to ensure development is supported in the most sustainable locations and in a sustainable way. This section of the report focuses on a number of themes which characterise such a service and the contribution the SDPA has made to each.

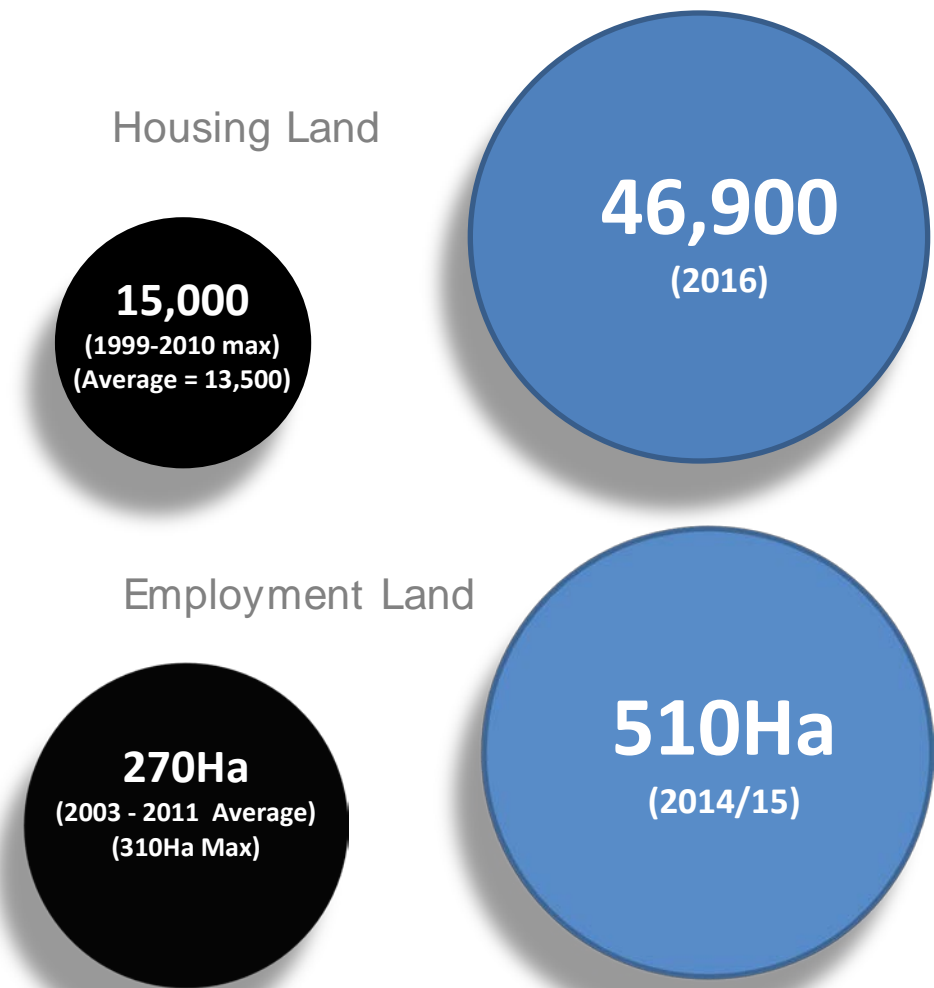
Open for business

6.2 The SDP area is one of the most economically dynamic in the whole of the UK, built on a strong presence from the oil and gas industry. One of the primary purposes of the strategic development plan is to facilitate this growth and direct this to the most sustainable locations. While the oil price fell fairly dramatically for the second year in a row, the effects on development rates will slowly emerge over time.

6.3 The Strategic Development Plan, Housing Land Audit and Employment Land Audit all highlight the positive and aspirational nature of the plans prepared by the SDPA. Significant quantities of land are now available in locations attractive to the development industry and end-users. The available supply of housing land, for example (see Figure 6) has more than trebled over the last five years through the development plan since 2009. Over a similar period of time, the availability of employment land has almost doubled. This will facilitate the significant expansion of house building (Figure 3) to complement the significant take-up being experienced in commercial floorspace. This effectively moved away from the long-term trend evident since the late 1990's to a significantly more positive land supply position.

6.4 Take-up of land for employment uses is likely to decline sharply during 2016 and 2017 as significant space is now available on the market and demand is at relatively low levels. House sales have also fallen over the last two years.

Figure 6: Established housing and employment land supply



Source: Housing & Employment Land Audits (rounded)

High quality development on the ground

6.5 One of the fundamental reasons for the delivery of an aspirational plan was to focus more on the quality of new development rather than fruitless arguments with the development industry over the quantity of new development.

6.6 The SDP sets the strategic framework for the delivery of high quality development on the ground, focusing as it does on the delivery of sustainable mixed communities. The plan explicitly targets national recognition for schemes, with award-winning schemes being highlighted to the SDPA on a regular basis. Recent examples include the University of Aberdeen for its new nursery, Portsoy Boatbuilding Centre and a private house in Aberdeen. However, it is still recognised that there is a long way to go to pull the quality of the majority of schemes up to that of the best.

Certainty

6.7 An up-to-date development plan is one of the primary contributions the SDPA can make to providing certainty to communities and the development industry.

6.8 The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in March 2014, within five years of the previously approved Structure Plan. It had been submitted to Ministers within the 4-year target set in legislation.

6.9 Local Development Plans consistent with the previous structure plan were adopted by both councils in 2012 so the whole area has an up-to-date development plan. Both councils are currently at the examination' stage of local development plan preparation, with both plans expected to be adopted during 2016/17.

6.10 A Development Plan Scheme has now been published for the next SDP, with the publication of the Proposed SDP anticipated in September 2017. The election cycles for Holyrood and Local Government elections, as well as the European referendum, have had a significant impact on the timetable, with the aim being to ensure decisions can be made in an inclusive way as possible and not constrained by pre-election



periods. However, the statutory nature of the submission target (four years after plan approval) makes this particularly challenging. The timetable does mean, however, that the new plan will be agreed by the new administrations in both Councils after the elections in May 2017. The time likely to be spent on the various stages of plan preparation is set out in Figure 7 below.

6.11 The highest element of risk identified to date for the delivery of the project plan revolves around the two election cycles. This will be actively monitored and managed throughout the plan preparation process, with consensus on a proposed plan being sought before the elections even though it won't be agreed and published until after the elections. Reducing risks in this way reduces risks at the implementation phase when both councils prepare Local Development Plans and make decisions on strategic planning applications. The previous structure plan was subject to no changes while the SDP was subject to very limited changes. This gives certainty to LDP preparation (enabling Main Issues Reports to be prepared on a firm foundation) as well as developers and communities.

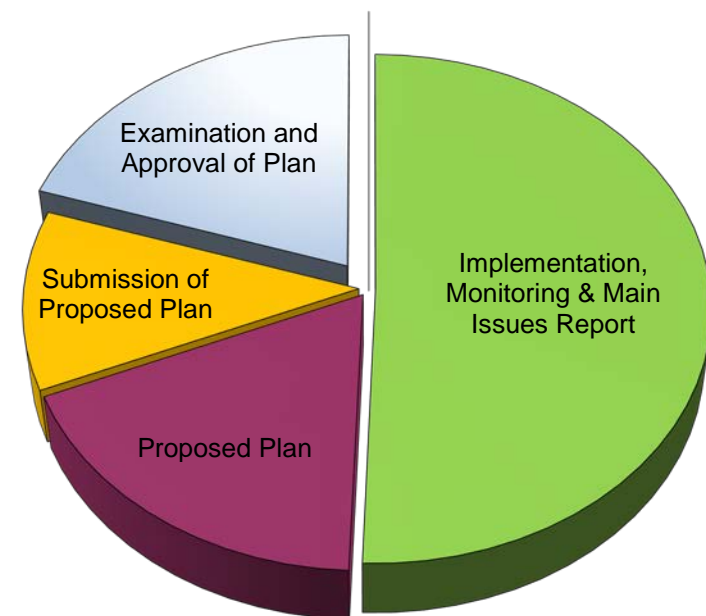
Communications, engagement and customer service

6.12 The SDPA pioneered the use of Plain English for strategic development plans. The current SDP as well as the Development Plan Scheme, Main Issues Report and Proposed Strategic Development Plan all have 'Crystal Marks' from the Plain English Campaign. The purpose of this accreditation is to recognise the importance of clear communication with customers.

6.13 An E-Update system was introduced on the launch of the SDPA's website in 2008 and the recipients of the emails now number around 180. Recipients range from interested individuals, community groups, neighbouring planning authorities, developers and consultants. Improvements have been made during the year (and into 2016/17) following a customer survey, with a twitter feed being introduced during 2016/17 to provide an additional channel of communication.

6.14 The use of the SDPA website is regularly monitored and reported to the SDPA. A particular focus is put on reporting site traffic during consultation periods when activity increases significantly. The Aberdeen City and Shire SDPA website is highly rated by search engines, with a

Figure 7: SDP Preparation Timescales



Note: The Pie diagram represents the five year plan preparation cycle, with the Main Issue Report stage not starting immediately after the approval of the previous plan.

Google search for 'SDPA' putting the website at the top of the list. This helps to ensure easy access to the website. A total of 15 news items were added to the website during the year.

6.15 Early engagement has already taken place on the preparation of the new SDP through a joint seminar with SDPA Members and the Nestrans (Regional Transport Partnership) Board. In addition to this, a workshop with SDPA Members took place looking at the current plan and the topics which might need to be addressed in the next plan. This will be repeated throughout the plan preparation process and rolled out to all 110 Councillors of both councils at appropriate points in the process.

6.16 The SDPA agendas normally include a Bulletin which is designed to inform Members and other interested parties of a range of matters related to the work of the SDPA but where decisions are not required. This included updates on various aspects of plan implementation in terms of both LDP progress, infrastructure projects and strategic planning applications related to the plan's proposals.

6.17 Liaison took place during the year with the two LDP teams to ensure the effective implementation of the SDP and provide assistance with issues such as housing land supply. Liaison also took place with neighbouring authorities with the same purpose as well as to feed into the next plan.

Efficient and effective decision-making

6.18 The SDPA is comprised of six Councillors from each council with three professional advisors (the Heads of Planning from both councils and the SDP Manager). The SDPA meet a minimum of four times a year, coinciding with key decision-making events in the life of the SDPA. However, there is the provision for additional meetings if required by the project plan. Attendance at the meetings is open to the public, with papers available in advance on the SDPA website.

6.19 Appendices 1 and 2 set out the membership and attendance of SDPA Members during the year. During the year Councillors Merson stood down from membership of the SDPA to be replaced by Councillor Aitchison. There were also three changes to substitute members, with councillors Clark, Gardiner and Kitts-Hayes being replaced by Councillors Gifford, Pratt and Robertson. Four of the five meetings during the year were attended by at least 10 members (out of 12). In addition, 8 of the 12 substitute members also attended at least one meeting.

6.20 Appropriate powers are delegated to the SDPA to ensure that decisions only need to be ratified at key points in the SDP process, primarily the agreement of the Proposed Plan. This ensures that the SDPA is effectively able to co-ordinate the preparation of the SDP and associated workstreams without constant recourse to the partner councils. The scheme of delegation to officers was reviewed during the year to help avoid the need for special meetings of the SDPA, and again in early 2016/17.

Effective management structures

6.21 A Management Team comprising the SDP Manager and the Heads of Planning from the two constituent councils meet on a regular basis to direct the work of the SDPA and consider reports for subsequent meetings of the SDPA.

Financial management and local governance

6.22 The SDPA is governed by a Minute of Agreement between Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council as well as a set of Financial Regulations, both of which are publically available on the SDPA website. Aberdeenshire Council act as Treasurer to the SDPA. The SDPA is audited on an annual basis as part of Audit Scotland's local government audit activities, with Deloitte being the current auditor. The Auditors Report and Audited Statement of Accounts are published annually on the SDPA website.

6.23 A budget for the SDPA is set and agreed on an annual basis, with indicative budgets produced for the following two years. The SDPA consider a Budget Monitoring Report at least three times a year and also agree unaudited and audited accounts on an annual basis.

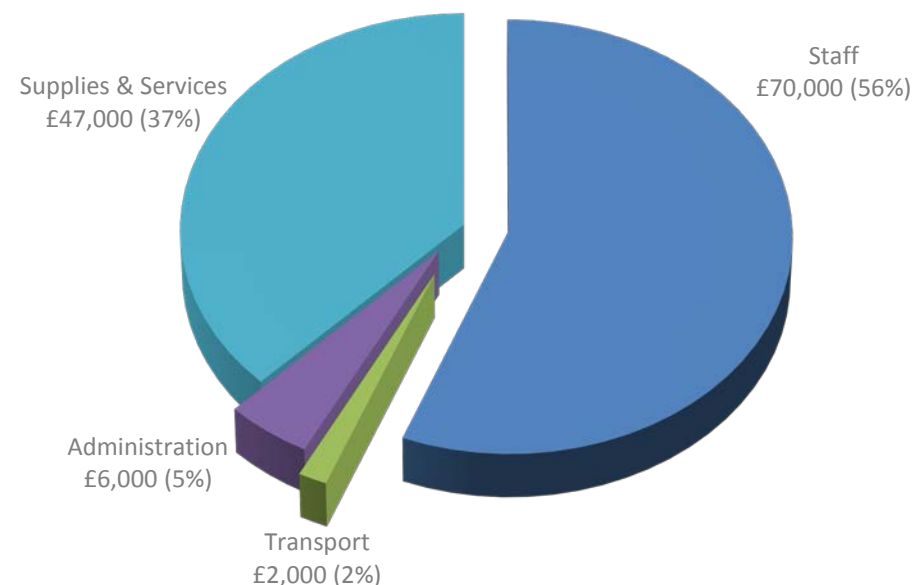
6.24 Costs for 2016/16 (£124,000) were higher than the previous year but lower than was budgeted for, due in part to the costs of the legal case but particularly due to there was just one member of staff during the whole of 2015/16.

Culture of continuous improvement

6.25 During the year staff benefited from a range of training opportunities and opportunities to share good practice – including the Homes for Scotland annual conference and a Brodies seminar.

6.26 SDP Managers across Scotland's four SDPAs meet on a quarterly basis to focus on innovating together and sharing good practice. The benefits of this have included joint approaches to the Scottish Government for clarifications and joint actions to improve processes and guidance.

Figure 8: SDPA Expenditure 2015/16 (Unaudited)



7. The year ahead

7.1 In the early part of 2016/17, work will focus on the ongoing legal case around the Strategic Transport Fund as well as the implications of the recommendations of the planning review. These are likely to extend throughout the year, with a particular emphasis on the review and the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations – which could involve a series of consultations. Two further continuing workstreams during the year are likely to relate to the implementation of the City Region Deal and the review of guidance in relation to housing land audits, housing supply targets and development plans.

7.2 In addition to the above, work is well underway on several of the tasks which will eventually lead to a Main Issues Report for the next SDP. The preparation of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment is a key element of this work and is now nearing completion. Liaison will continue with neighbouring authorities and Key Agencies, while online engagement with communities and stakeholders will take place in advance of the Main Issues Report. This will take place over the summer in parallel with the preparation of the background reports required to be published alongside it. Work has also started with Nestrans to upgrade the ASAM regional transport model to enable it to be used to assess the transport impacts associated with next plan and the review of the regional transport strategy.

7.3 In early 2017 the focus will shift from a discussion of the main issues the next plan needs to address to the preparation of the plan itself, although this won't be agreed and published until the autumn of 2017.

7.4 Five meetings of the SDPA are planned for 2016/17, although the nature of the work over the year means that another meeting may be required in the autumn of 2016.

Service improvements: 2016-17

7.5 In the coming year we will:

- *Develop a series of easily updatable infographics which can be used across the four SDPAs.*
- *Implement a Twitter account to facilitate engagement on the next SDP.*
- *Implement an online engagement tool (in partnership with Community Planning) and assess its value for strategic planning in conjunction with the other three SDPAs.*

SDPA Meetings 2016/17

| |
|-------------------|
| 19 May 2016 |
| 15 June 2016 |
| 21 September 2016 |
| 21 December 2016 |
| 22 March 2017 |













8. Supporting evidence

Supporting evidence

7.6 This report was compiled drawing on evidence from the following sources:

- [Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan \(2009\)](#)
- [Housing Land Audit 2016](#)
- [Employment Land Audit 2014/15](#)
- [Minute of Agreement and Standing Orders \(Version 2, 2010\)](#)
- [Audited Statement of Accounts 2014/15](#)
- [Report by External Auditors 2014/15](#)
- [Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2015/16](#)
- [Development Plan Scheme 2016/17](#)
- [Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan \(2014\)](#)
- [Scottish Government SDP Approval letter \(March 2014\)](#)
- [Strategic Development Plan Monitoring Report \(September 2014\)](#)
- [Supplementary Planning Guidance: Delivering Transport Improvements through a Strategic Transport Fund \(2012\)](#)
- [Supplementary Guidance: Strategic Transport Fund \(2015\)](#)
- [Graphical Communication in Strategic Development Plans \(2012\)](#)
- [Sub-regional Productivity \(March 2016\) – Office for National Statistics](#)
- [Sub-national Population Estimates \(June 2016\) – National Records of Scotland](#)
- [Registers of Scotland – Monthly House Price Statistics](#)
- [Scottish Government Signals Planning Modernisation - 9/6/2015](#)

Appendix 1: SDPA Membership (as at 31 March 2016)

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cllr P Argyle (Chair) | Cllr R Milne (Vice Chair) | Cllr D Aitchison | Cllr P Bellarby | Cllr J Corall | Cllr J Cox |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cllr A Finlayson | Cllr N Smith | Cllr R Grant | Cllr R Thompson | Cllr B Topping | Cllr I Yuill |

Appendix 2: Councillor attendance at SDPA meetings

| | 24 April 2015 | 25 June 2015 | 23 September 2015 | 2 December 2015 | 23 March 2016 | Total |
|---|---------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|
| Councillor Peter Argyle | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 |
| Councillor David Aitchison ¹ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 |
| Councillor Peter Bellarby | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 |
| Councillor John Corall | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | 3 |
| Councillor John Cox | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 |
| Councillor Andrew Finlayson | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 4 |
| Councillor Ross Grant | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 3 |
| Councillor Rob Merson ¹ | ✓ | | | | | 1 |
| Councillor Ramsay Milne | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 5 |
| Councillor Norman Smith | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 4 |
| Councillor Ross Thomson | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 3 |
| Councillor Brian Topping | ✓ | | | | ✓ | 2 |
| Councillor Ian Yuill | | | | ✓ | ✓ | 2 |
| SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS | | | | | | |
| Councillor Graeme Clark | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Bill Cormie | | | | | ✓ | 1 |
| Councillor Steve Delaney | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Alan Donnelly | ✓ | | | | | 1 |
| Councillor Alan Gardiner | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Jim Gifford | | | | | ✓ | 1 |
| Councillor Gordon Graham | | | | ✓ | | 1 |
| Councillor Ian Gray | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Martin Kitts-Hayes | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Jean Morrison | | | | | ✓ | 1 |
| Councillor Gillian Owen | ✓ | | | | | 1 |
| Councillor Stuart Pratt | | ✓ | | ✓ | | 2 |
| Councillor Anne Robertson | | ✓ | | | | 1 |
| Councillor Stephen Smith | | | | | | 0 |
| Councillor Angela Taylor | | | | | | 0 |
| | 11 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 12 | |

Note: Substitute Members are only entitled to attend meetings of the SDPA when substantive members are unable to attend.

Appendix 3: Workforce and financial information

¹ Councillor Aitchison took the place of Councillor Merson on the SDPA prior to the June SDPA meeting. Three substitute members also changed.

| Head of Planning Service | Tier? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|---|--|------------------|--------|---|--|------------------|--------|--|--|-------------------------|--------|--|--|--------|--|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Managers | | | | Main Grade Posts | | | | Technician Posts | | | | Office support/Clerical | | | | | |
| | No. | | | | No. | | | | No. | | | | No. | | | | | |
| | Posts | Vacant | | | Posts | Vacant | | | Posts | Vacant | | | Posts | Vacant | | | Totals | |
| Development Planning | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |

| Staffing profile | Number | Committees & site visits | No. per year |
|------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Under 30 | 1 | SDPA | 5 |
| 30-39 | | Full Council | 0 |
| 40-49 | | Council Committees | 0 |
| 50 and Over | | Area Committees | 0 |

| Budgets | Budget | Costs | | Income |
|----------------------|--------|--------|----------|--------|
| | | Direct | Indirect | |
| Planning Service | | | | |
| Development Planning | £124k | | | £124k |

Note: More detailed information is available in the SDPA's unaudited accounts for 2015/16 which are available from the SDPA website

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