

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FINDINGS OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

The following table sets out the **findings** from the Report of the Strategic Development Plan Review, carried out by Kevin Murray Associates and Glasgow University between October 2013 and April 2014. The priority findings, as identified by the review team, are highlighted in bold. The **leads** suggested by the review team are also noted. The **discussion** column provides a general indication of support or otherwise from Planning and Architecture Division. Following discussion with stakeholders identified as leads, **actions** the Scottish Government will take are set out in the final column. We recognise that a number of the actions are for the SDPA teams to lead and implement themselves. We welcome, however, on-going engagement with the SDPAs and the other interests identified, to continue to strengthen strategic development planning.

REPORT		RESPONSE	
FINDINGS	LEAD	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS
OVERVIEW THEME 1: Collaborative leadership and governance			
1.1 There is a need to build greater capacity, awareness and more effective behaviours in strategic planning through annual training of political and professional leaders. Events such as the annual Development Planning National Forum, an annual conveners meeting and Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) meetings contribute to this.	All SDPAs with SG, HOPS, RTPi	Raising awareness of the significance of strategic planning would be positive and beneficial. Ministers have confirmed their commitment to development planning and improving its performance, using the profile of the NPF and SPP launch.	1. The Minister for Local Government and Planning will highlight the importance of indicators on strategic level planning and suggest their inclusion in performance frameworks to the High Level Group discussion.
1.2 There is a need to invest further in effective partnership approaches, and in the trust that underpins them, by aligning vision, strategy and delivery mechanisms.	All SDPAs and agency partners	<p>This maintains the emphasis already established through discussions with convenors at the annual meeting and planners at the national development plan forum (March 2014). This should be repeated at the next of these events and at the Heads of Planning meeting, anticipated in November 2014.</p> <p>In addition, SDPAs could share good practice across their teams, as well as identifying suitable other opportunities to promote strategic planning and joint-working with relevant stakeholders.</p>	<p>2. The Minister for Local Government and Planning offers to meet with the convenors of the four Strategic Development Plan (SDP) areas to identify further ways to strengthen strategic development planning.</p> <p>3. We will ensure that SDPs are highlighted and discussed in the Development Planning Forum, Heads of Planning and Convenors events in the coming year.</p>

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OVERVIEW THEME 2: Effective engagement and scrutiny			
2.1 There is a need for more targeted engagement with the wider community at different levels to build awareness and knowledge of the SDP role, purpose and implications.	All SDPAs, SG – with RTPI & PAS	Discussions with the leads established a range of work already on-going in relation to engagement. Proportionality and consideration of value added was highlighted as an issue at a time of resource pressures.	4. We will encourage the Strategic Development Planning Authorities (SDPAs) to work with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Improvement Service and Planning Aid Scotland to take stock of effective approaches and share good practice.
2.2 The use of a variety of mechanisms to enhance engagement, appropriate to local circumstances, including the potential use of a representative forum or sounding board, should be supported.	SDPA teams	We note that SDPAs have not so far co-opted other parties onto their committees and that they should explore whether this might offer a useful way to widen input and engagement.	5. We will share our own experience in securing engagement in strategic level planning with the SDPA managers and their teams.
2.3 Outreach promotion of the SDP function and relevance to politicians beyond those directly involved is required, to deepen understanding. In this context, previous activity such as the leaflet and video produced on strategic planning by Architecture and Design Scotland and the SDPAs with the Scottish Government serves as an example of this type of outreach.	SDPA teams & SG	Further work to promote the SDP role and purpose is noted above. Hearings and inquiry sessions are methods available under the current system. Their use depends on the issues being examined and the extent to which the reporter considers there to be enough information on which to base recommendations. While some parties may consider an oral process increases a feeling of transparency, it is not clear that using this route when the necessary written evidence is available, would result in a better or different outcome. We therefore do not propose to make hearings a mandatory part of the process.	6. We will encourage the SDPAs to consider following the guidance in Circular 2/2008: Statutory Guidance on Strategic Development Planning Authorities, to co-opt others onto SDPA committees, to ensure wider input and engagement.
2.4 As the normal default position, the Scottish Government should hold hearings as part of SDP examinations. The issues would continue to be determined by the reporter but there would be a greater presumption towards holding such hearings. A body of opinion (Annex E) from a range of stakeholders suggested that public examinations could form a standard part of the process. This came from written submissions, questionnaire feedback and two of the workshop events. However, we understand that the level of resource required for this would be higher, and appear counter to a more streamlined planning system. Despite these points to the contrary we have some sympathy with the stakeholders. A public element to the examination would be an important opportunity to raise concerns and build confidence in the strategic planning system.	SG.		

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OVERVIEW THEME 3: Housing and community building			
<p>3.1 There is a benefit in nurturing the positive emerging trend for a 'placemaking approach' to areas of major change, that seeks to explore and articulate the creation of positive communities by exploring spatial implications of infrastructure, development and green networks at a framework level, ideally as a special inset of the plan. These are to provide a framework for masterplans at the next level with LDPs.</p>	SDPAs, supported by SG, A&DS and others	We consider that the place making approach and technical analysis of housing need and demand should work in parallel - the HNDA helping to identify <i>how much</i> growth to plan for, at the same time as examining <i>where</i> there is capacity for growth and of <i>what</i> type. The new HNDA guidance is aligned with the new SPP to support this.	7. We will encourage the SDPAs to work with the Scottish Government and Architecture and Design Scotland to explore how the HNDA can feed into an effective place-making approach to strategic development planning.
<p>3.2 As an important input into the placemaking approach, the housing needs and demand assessment (HNDA) process be reviewed, so as to streamline where possible and contextualise the tool for a placemaking approach, while retaining an agreed system all can support. Key concerns reported were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the high level of staff time and other resources required for the HNDA process – the level of technical proficiency required – concern that the output value was not high enough to warrant the level of input – concern that the General Register Office for Scotland statistics used did not provide an accurate enough picture (stakeholders reported that this either led to gross over or under supply rather than the correct level). <p>Additional Scottish Government guidance has mitigated some initial concerns, and further guidance is expected shortly which may address some of the these additional concerns. Staff at one SDPA raised the point that wholesale change at this stage could undo a lot of the learning and resources that have already been put into this system.</p>	SG with SDPAs	At the SDP level, it will be high level discussion about general locations and once those have been identified, LDPs should consider specific sites and master-plan their delivery. Discussions with stakeholders have highlighted difficulties in the delivery of infrastructure relating to finance, scale and site conditions (See Actions for Overview Theme 4).	8. We will work with the SDPAs to support the effective implementation of the refreshed HNDA guidance and, following completion of all four HNDAs in SDP areas, undertake a stocktake together with the authorities.
<p>3.3 Further investigation is required to determine if the plans should provide a focus to ensure that infrastructure required is provided alongside, or in advance of, the proposed development. Such focus would be gained through the strategic plan creating an integrative pathway for the delivery of infrastructure – giving a greater degree of certainty to either developers or those responsible for delivering infrastructure.</p>	SDPAs, RTPs and infrastructure partners		

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OVERVIEW THEME 4: Transport and infrastructure role			
<p>4.1 There is a benefit in working in close partnership to create a fully integrated land use and transport approach to each SDP. This would mean that the SDP provides a Joint Development and Transport Strategy, for the medium to long term, that addresses both strategy and phased delivery through investment over time. Currently barriers that prevent this close alignment are cultural and institutional, timeframes (cf. chapter 3, Timescales p35) and plan boundaries that are not aligned (see 4.2).</p>	SG, TS, SDPAs, RTPs	<p>We expect SDPAs to work in close partnership with stakeholders, particularly Transport Scotland and RTPs to ensure that the transport implications of the land use strategy in the SDP are fully assessed. Action Programmes should then go on to outline how the strategy will be delivered. As noted above, discussion has highlighted difficulties in delivery of infrastructure, particularly transport.</p>	<p>9. We will commission research on funding approaches to support strategic infrastructure provision.</p>
<p>4.2 Closer alignment of the SDPA boundary areas and the RTP boundary areas could aid closer strategy and project working, with a view to producing co-ordinated investment programmes that align land use and transport.</p>	SG, TS, SDPAs, RTPs	<p>We are not convinced that boundary alignment is necessary to achieve co-ordination. RTPs and SDPAs have different roles and functions and should work across boundaries to achieve joint aims. We do however support stronger links between transport and planning interests, helped by further clarity around roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>10. We will work with Transport Scotland to refresh the Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPM-TAG), and encourage involvement from the SDPAs and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), to ensure further clarity around roles and responsibilities.</p>
<p>4.3 Inclusion and agreement should be established within the joint Development and Transport Strategy as a prerequisite for evaluating and supporting funding bids.</p>	SG, TS, SDPAs & local gov.		
<p>4.4 Further investigation should determine if a review is required of the Transport Scotland guidance on Development Planning and Management (DPMTAG) to align with recently updated and emerging policy and ensure that SDPAs, key stakeholders and partners are aware of and use the approach set out to provide appropriate and proportionate transport appraisals to support SDPs.</p>	SG, TS, SDPAs		<p>11 We will encourage the reinvigoration of engagement between the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and Heads of Planning, and between the SDPA managers and the RTP Lead Officers' Group, to identify and share good practice on strategic planning.</p>

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OVERVIEW THEME 5: The influence on delivery			
5.1 There is a benefit in aligning and integrating the relevant SDP strategy and project components within the work of the respective Community Planning Partnerships and Single Outcome Agreement.	SG, SDPAs, CPPs, local authorities	The new SPP highlights that effective integration of land use planning and community planning is crucial.	12. We will explore options for improving integration of land use and community planning, with a view to piloting approaches in at least one authority in the coming year. 13. We will bring together and publish further information on effective Action Programmes.
5.2 Further investigation is required to determine if better delivery outcomes can be achieved through use of the strategy themes and component projects within the SDP as a basis for funding and delivering key strategic infrastructure.	SG, SDPAs, CPP, TS	There is scope for flexibility in the format and presentation of Action Programmes for them to be more delivery focussed than monitoring mechanisms. They could include information on relevant triggers and delay factors, and could be live documents hosted online to be updated when necessary. We would encourage SDPs to retain their strategic, cross-cutting focus. If projects are of this nature they may be for SDPs to consider, however site specific development is the focus of Local Development Plans.	
5.3 There is a need to augment existing monitoring with an annual public statement (moving up to annual from every two years) of SDP Action Programme progress, highlighting triggers and delay factors by organisation.	SDPAs		
5.4 Each SDPA should clearly identify a small number of headline strategic urban transformation projects that can have strategic impact across the area over time. These would be identified priorities that have a broader knock-on effect in the wider area.	SDPAs		
5.5 Consideration should be given to extending the various SDP specialist topic groups to include more representative and third sector bodies, (such a universities or professional bodies) to enhance knowledge and research input into the overall process.	Each SDPA as appropriate		
OVERVIEW THEME 6: Resourcing and skills			
6.1 To boost the existing skilled cohort, the Scottish Government should consider scope to provide an extra level of resource, either through a pool of skilled practitioners in graphics and GIS, or for HNDA through funding for specialist consultants (as has been provided in the past) that can be drawn down as required, or as a financial share (equivalent to the constituent local authorities’ share) or some combination of the two.	SG.	Resource pressures across the public sector mean looking at alternative ways of plan preparation and delivery. Consideration should be given to specialist work areas for sharing knowledge, expertise and resource. SDPAs could also share information on recruitment and training, particularly for temporary posts. The SG does not at present nor intend to set any financial benchmarks for planning functions. This would be for HOPS and	14. We will encourage SDPAs to work together to identify the scope for shared resources and skills development.
6.2 To aid consistency of investment and skills levels, the Scottish Government should set an indicative budget benchmark for strategic planning in each city region, equivalent either to a per capita cost, some proportion of gross planning fees, or some proportion of overall investment in the respective built environment.	SG.		

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6.3 There is a benefit in moving to an approach whereby all SDPA teams are part of a shared national resource, whose time and expertise can be traded across the four SDPAs to balance peaks and troughs.	SG, SDPAs	SDPAs to agree with individual authorities.	
6.4 There should be an explicit programme to develop strategic planning skills, to grow awareness and competence across Scotland. This would include philosophy, techniques and creative partnering and be applicable to key agencies and community players as well as planners.	SG, RTPI, Improvement Service	The RTPI and the Improvement Service might consider the need for a shared national resource of strategic planners, although the regular review of plans means there are likely to be fewer troughs in activity where planners could move around to support other areas.	

Planning and Architecture Division
Scottish Government
June 2014