

Strategy - 3b Local Development Plans – Cumulative Impacts

- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the ongoing work that has progressed since the completion of the Local Development Plan Cumulative Transport Appraisal and, in particular, ongoing discussions on the mechanisms for delivery of strategic infrastructure to address the cumulative impacts of development.

- Background

The results of the Cumulative Impact Appraisal, undertaken by MVA consultants and using the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM4), were reported to the Board in August 2010. A copy of the findings is available at http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/LDP_Cumulative_Appraisal_Final_Report.pdf.

The results of this work identified a number of locations across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire where transport interventions would be required to fully support the level of development allocated in the emerging Local Development Plans for the two authorities. A package of high level options was developed to represent the scope and scale of interventions that may be required to mitigate the identified congestion impacts associated with new development and to provide an appropriate level of public transport accessibility. The findings of this work were noted and the Board approved the report for publication.

Since completion of this study, the working group, involving representatives from Nestrans, the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA), Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council planning and transport teams and the respective Planning Gain Team, have met on a regular basis to discuss the next steps and agree the principles for managing the delivery of strategic infrastructure.

Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire have incorporated the findings of the Cumulative Transport Appraisal into their proposed Local Development Plans (LDPs) and have identified the need for developments to contribute towards strategic infrastructure to address the cumulative impact of development.

- Proposed way forward

All development has an impact on the wider transport network and not just on the immediate surroundings. The proposed approach seeks to ensure that development is matched by an appropriate level of infrastructure and that sustainable transport modes provide an attractive alternative to the car. The provision of a comprehensive and high quality transport network will also help to attract inward investment and contribute to sustainable economic development.

It is recognised that there are a number of current priorities identified for the enhancement of the strategic transport network in the region. Alongside this, a range of transport infrastructure will be required to support new development. The working group is recommending that such transport schemes should be grouped in the following four categories:

- A – Committed infrastructure that already has political support and funding allocated. These schemes are regional priorities designed to address existing problems on the transport network and were included in the reference case of the appraisal work. The benefits gained by such schemes have therefore been taken into account and this provides the base case against which the impact of development has been assessed.
- B – Schemes which are committed politically and also listed in the Council's LDP's as committed but funding is not confirmed. Such schemes are designed primarily to address existing problems on the transport network and were included in the reference case of the appraisal work. The benefits gained by such schemes have therefore been taken into account and this provides the base case against which the impact of development has been assessed.
- C – Strategic infrastructure required to address the cumulative impacts of development. The Cumulative Transport Appraisal provides an overview of the cumulative impact of development on the transport network and identifies the broad level of additional infrastructure required to support development, as well as the likely benefits of providing such infrastructure. Further work is still necessary to identify the details of the specific interventions required.
- D – 'Local' infrastructure requirements required to mitigate the direct impact of specific development sites. This would be directly attributable to development sites (and Masterplan Zones identified in the City LDP) and should be reflected in Masterplans prepared and funded by developers. Arrangements for funding of local infrastructure which provides shared benefits within the zones will need to be agreed between the constituent developers and the Local Authority through the masterplanning process.

Appendix 1 to this report lists the A, B and C schemes and areas for intervention.

There is agreement between partners on the working group that a regional model for securing developer contributions for strategic infrastructure should be pursued. Such a model would be based on openness and transparency ensuring equity and common benefit. There is also agreement amongst those on the working group that the proposed approach should be based around the following principles:

- Major developments (larger residential developments and appropriate commercial proposals) located within the Strategic Growth Areas in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area should be required to contribute to a single ring-fenced fund set aside to deliver strategic transport improvements to address the cumulative impact of development.
- Developer contributions to this strategic fund could be made on either a per-trip or per-house basis, proportionate to the predicted impact on the transport network of the development. Discussions are ongoing in terms of the method to be used, the rate to be applied and how this would be calculated.
- Nestrans would be an appropriate body to manage this fund for strategic transport infrastructure, with schemes delivered according to a prioritised list agreed by all partners. It is felt appropriate that this prioritisation should reflect the priority corridors identified in the Structure Plan, but with a degree of flexibility. Such a list will need to be reviewed regularly in order to monitor the developments which come forward for implementation.

Discussions with Aberdeenshire Council's finance team have identified that it would be possible for Nestrans to hold the fund for strategic transport infrastructure with the funds raised through this mechanism ring-fenced for delivering the cumulative transport projects.

There are a number of ways of taking this proposal forward but one is the possibility of debating these issues in the Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report. Addressing this through the Strategic Development Plan would mean it is only agreed once and would apply to both Council areas. The working group is in agreement that the mechanisms for delivery of strategic infrastructure, based around the principles outlined above, should be set out in Supplementary Guidance. This could be done under the current approved Structure Plan and, in time, the new Strategic Development Plan. It is currently anticipated that consultation could be carried out alongside the Main Issues Report, with the Supplementary Guidance approved later in 2011. Given the joint workshop planned for 27 March 2011 between Nestrans and the SDPA, this subject could be one discussed at this event.

The working group is very keen to ensure that the development industry is consulted early in the progression of these proposals and a meeting was held with representatives of Grampian House Builders Committee and Homes for Scotland on 2 February 2011 in order to gain their initial views. A further meeting with the wider Committee is scheduled for 10 March to continue this engagement.

It is felt that this proposed methodology provides a fair and reasonable approach to addressing the cumulative impact of development. The Cumulative Transport Appraisal carried out in 2010 provides the rationale for attributing reasonable costs to developers for the likely level of additional cumulative infrastructure required. Calculating developer contributions on a per-house or per-trip basis is the means by which we propose to apportion these costs. The principles of this approach have been discussed with the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland and they, along with the respective Councils, have confirmed that this is a viable approach in the context of planning Circular 1/2010 on Planning Agreements.

- Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Note the discussions that have taken place amongst the working group;
2. Support the principles outlined above in relation to mechanisms for developer contributions;
3. Approve the proposal that Nestrans be the body to manage the fund for delivering strategic infrastructure and manage the processes for prioritisation and delivery.
4. Note the schemes listed in Appendix 1; and
5. Refer this report to the two Councils for approval.

KM/2 February 2011

A-List Schemes – Political support and funding allocated
Laurencekirk rail station – <i>Delivered</i>
Grade separation on the A90 at Findon - <i>Delivered</i>
A956 dual carriageway upgrade - <i>Delivered</i>
A96-to-Aberdeen Airport Link Road
A90 Balmedie – Tippetty dualling
Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
Park and Ride sites at Chapelbrae (A96), Parkhill (A947) & Schoolhill (A90 south) and associated bus services
Haudagain roundabout improvements
B-List Schemes – Political support but funding not confirmed
Strategic Rail – Improved Edinburgh – Aberdeen, Aberdeen – Inverurie & Aberdeen - Inverness
Union Street pedestrianisation and traffic management schemes
The 3 rd Don Crossing
Berryden Corridor
South College Street Improvements
C-List Schemes – Required to address cumulative impacts of development
North Aberdeen
Parkway, Persley Bridge & Parkhill Improvements
A96 corridor
Capacity improvements & Upgrade Kingswells North Junction
A944 Corridor
Upgrade A944 junctions
A956 / A90 Corridor
Junction capacity improvements
River Dee Link
Public Transport
New station at Kintore
Bus priority measures
Bus frequency improvements
Additional bus services linking new development sites to city centre and key employment destinations.