

ANGUS COUNCIL

ANGUS COUNCIL – 23 MARCH 2017

PLACES, PEOPLE AND PLANNING – A CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE SCOTTISH PLANNING SYSTEM

REPORT BY VIVIEN SMITH, HEAD OF PLANNING AND PLACE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council that the Scottish Government has recently consulted on the future of the Scottish Planning System. This report sets out the Council's proposed response for agreement.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) note the publication of the Scottish Government's consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System;
- (ii) agree that the draft response set out in **Appendix 1** is submitted as Angus Council's response to the Consultation;
- (iii) authorise the Head of Planning and Place to submit Angus Council's response to the consultation following any necessary changes to the format, appearance and technical details.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report does not directly contribute to the local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013 – 2016. It will, however, influence future land use planning in Angus and therefore contribute subsequently to both the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement.

3. BACKGROUND

In September 2015, the Scottish Government announced that it had appointed an independent panel to undertake a review of the planning system in Scotland. The aims of the review were to achieve a quicker, more accessible and efficient planning process in order to build investor and community confidence in the system.

The Scottish Government invited written evidence from interested parties between 19 October and 1 December 2015. Angus Council submitted a response which was presented as an Information Report to the Communities Committee at their meeting on the 19 January 2016 (Schedule 5 of Report 15/16 refers). Having heard from communities, developers, professional planners and a wide range of organisations with an interest in planning, the panel set out clear recommendations for change in their report "Empowering Planning to Deliver Great Places", published in May 2016.

Scottish Ministers published an initial response to the report of the independent Panel on July 11 2016. This response welcomed the report and agreed in principle with many of the recommendations. The response set out ten immediate actions which included further research and collaboration which would enable and inform further reform of the Planning System.

The Scottish Government published a consultation on Building Standards Fees in November 2016. A further consultation was published in December 2016 in relation to Raising Planning Fees. Angus Council has responded to both consultations as noted by the Communities Committee at their meeting on the 28 February 2017 (Report 87/17 refers).

On the 10 January 2017 the Scottish Government published "Places, People and Planning – A Consultation on the Future of the Scottish Planning System. In considering the responses to the proposed changes to Planning and Building Warrant fees at their meeting on the 28 February 2017, the Communities Committee agreed that a report on the wider consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning system should be brought before Angus Council on the 23 March 2017.

4. PROPOSALS

The Places, People and Planning consultation paper published in January sets out that Planning should be central to the delivery of great places and a force for positive change. The Scottish Government believe that in order to do this, Scotland needs a planning system which helps growth to happen and unlocks the potential of our people and places.

Four key areas of change are set out on which views are sought:

Making plans for the future – having inspiring, clear plans for the future through simplifying and strengthening development planning processes. Recommendations include:

- Better alignment of community planning and spatial planning;
- Improved regional partnership working replacing the production of strategic development plans;
- Improving national spatial planning and policy through better reflection of regional priorities in the National Planning Framework;
- Stronger local development plans with the plan period extended to ten years rather than five with a new "gatecheck" looking at significant issues at an early stage to simplify the Development Plan examination; and
- Making plans that deliver by strengthening the commitment that comes from allocating development land in the plan and improving the use of delivery programmes.

People make the system work – empowering people to have more influence on the future of their places, and improving the way people are involved in the planning process. Recommendations include:

- Giving people an opportunity to plan their own place through local place plans which should form part of the statutory development plan;
- Getting more people involved in planning in particular children and young people having a stronger voice in decisions about the future of their places;
- Improving public trust through better pre-application consultation and community involvement where proposals are not supported in the development plan; and
- Keeping decisions local with more review decisions to be made locally rather than centrally.

Building more homes and delivering infrastructure – creating better places where people can live healthy lives with planning actively enabling and co-ordinating development. Recommendations include:

- Being clear about how much housing land is required with clearer national and regional aspirations for new homes;
- Closing the gap between planning consent and delivery of homes with planning authorities taking more steps to actively help deliver development;
- Releasing more "development ready" land with the potential for zoned housing land;
- Embedding an infrastructure first approach with better co-ordination of infrastructure planning at a national and regional level;
- A more transparent approach to funding infrastructure with new powers for a local levy to raise additional finance; and
- Innovative infrastructure planning looking ahead to deliver local carbon solutions, new digital technologies and the facilities that communities need.

Stronger leadership and smarter resourcing – reducing bureaucracy and improving resources so the planning system can focus on creating great places. Recommendations include:

- Developing skills of planning professionals and others to deliver outcomes;
- Investing in a better planning service through increasing planning fees;
- A new approach to improving performance in terms of how is it monitored, reported and improved;
- Making better use of resources through efficient decision making and removing the need for planning consent from a wider range of developments; and
- Innovation, designing for the future and the digital transformation of planning services.

The consultation asks a series of 38 technical questions relating to the proposals set out above. The proposed detailed responses to these questions are set out in Appendix 1 to this report. In general, the positive tone of the recommendations and the desire to see more proactive planning services that are less focussed on process and more on delivery of infrastructure and development is welcomed.

The consultation invites responses by the 4 April 2017. Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence. A report of the analysis will be published, and further legislative change and guidance brought forward where appropriate.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The consultation being carried out and any resulting changes to legislation could result in either increased fees for Planning and Building Warrant applications being received by the Council if the changes to fees are implemented. Any increase in fees or ability for discretionary charging could help the Council move towards full cost recovery for some of the services provided.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- [Scottish Government Consultation Places, people and planning – a consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System](#)

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Council Officer’s response to Scottish Government consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System.