

## Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	SESplan: Representations to Proposed Plan

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**REPORT TO:** Members' Library Service

**MEETING DATE:**

**BY:** Executive Director (Services for Communities)

**SUBJECT:** SESplan: Representations to Proposed Plan

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise members of the representations that have been made to SESplan's Proposed Plan, to note that these will be considered at a SESplan Joint Committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June and to note the procedures that will be followed to secure the Plan's submission to Scottish Ministers.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note that:
- (i) Summaries of the representations submitted in respect of SESplan's Proposed Plan (November 2011), together with SESplan's proposed responses to these, are available in members' offices for their information; and
  - (ii) In the event that the SESplan Joint Committee of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012 agrees not to make any modification to its Proposed Plan in the light of these representations, then there is no requirement to have this decision ratified by East Lothian Council. However, any decision to modify the Proposed Plan prior to submission to Scottish Ministers would require to be ratified by all the member authorities.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

### *Context*

- 3.1 SESplan is the Strategic Development Planning Authority responsible for preparing a strategic development plan (SDP) for Edinburgh and SE Scotland. The SDP area includes the whole of the four Lothian Councils and Scottish Borders Council, together with the southern part of Fife.

- 3.2 SESplan is governed by a Joint Committee comprising two councillors from each of the six authorities. East Lothian Council is the chair for 2012.
- 3.3 The preparation of the SDP is at an advanced stage, with a Proposed Plan published in November 2011. SESplan's approval of the Proposed Plan was ratified by all six Councils in accordance with SESplan's Scheme of Delegation (in East Lothian's case at its 23 August 2011 Council meeting).
- 3.4 A substantial number of representations were made against the Proposed Plan during its subsequent period 'on deposit'. Criticisms of the adequacy of the Proposed Plan's housing land requirement dominate. SESplan will consider the representations and agree a response to them at a meeting of the SESplan Joint Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

#### *Approval procedures*

- 3.5 East Lothian Council has previously agreed an amendment to SESplan's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation (ELC 28 February 2012). Normally, all major SESplan decisions on the content of the SDP require to be ratified by each of the six member authorities. However, in the specific instance that the SESplan Joint Committee determines not to modify the Proposed Plan in the light of its consideration of representations received, this Council has agreed that the Joint Committee has the authority to submit the Proposed Plan directly to Scottish Ministers.
- 3.6 Were this to be the case, then this would mean that SESplan's Proposed Plan would be submitted to Ministers in the form in which it was published in November 2011 and previously approved by the Joint Committee and the constituent Councils, in ELC's case 23 August 2011.
- 3.7 Whether or not the Proposed Plan is modified by SESplan, an Examination will then be held into unresolved issues before the Plan is approved, with or without amendment, by Scottish Ministers.

#### *Summary of Representations*

- 3.8 Copies of SESplan's summaries of the representations and its responses to them are available in members' offices for information. The representations are grouped together under specific issues in a standard format (referred to as Schedule 4's).
- 3.9 In summary, most representations relate to housing and spatial strategy issues. The housebuilding industry does not accept that the Proposed Plan is making sufficient provision for their requirements and is not providing the Scottish Government's required 'generous supply'. There are concerns that the Proposed Plan is not in compliance with Scottish Planning Policy, for example, by not providing a housing requirement to years 7 and 12 of the Plan or giving sufficient indication of the phasing and distribution of housing between 2024 and 2032.

- 3.10 The industry has concerns about the phasing of housing, arguing that too much of the housing provision is phased in later years, particularly to 2024-2032. It is also argued that there should be less support for existing strategic housing sites that are yet to start and a review of their effectiveness to contribute to the Plan's housing land supply.
- 3.11 Many other representations flow from this, for example, the need to consider drawing green belt boundaries less tightly around existing settlements in order to provide greater opportunity for additional housing land. Inevitably, many representations also seek support for particular sites or locations, something that is a matter for the subsequent Local Development Plans to address, not for SESplan.
- 3.12 Representations specific to East Lothian include the general view that insufficient provision is being made for additional housing here. Blindwells is both criticised as being non-effective (particularly by those supporting other sites) and supported (by landowners/developers both within the current allocated site and beyond).
- 3.13 Submissions are made for the expansion of Tranent, Wallyford, Prestonpans, Longniddry, Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar. There are objections to the exclusion of the North Berwick area from the East Lothian Strategic Development Area (SDA) (largely on drainage capacity grounds) and also objections to the exclusion of Ormiston.

*SESplan Response*

- 3.14 Members are asked to note that the SESplan Project Manager's recommendation to the SESplan Joint Committee is that no modifications should be made to the Proposed Plan in the light of these representations.
- 3.15 On the matter of housing provision, SESplan argues that the Proposed Plan does provide a generous supply of housing land. Given the significantly reduced house completions since the economic and housing market downturn, to plan for the demand figures identified in the overall SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment would in SESplan's view undermine the spatial strategy and require annual house completion rates well in excess of levels delivered previously in the SESplan area. To even achieve the SESplan housing requirement will require levels of annual house completions never previously experienced within the SESplan area.
- 3.16 For similar reasons, SESplan has taken the view that identifying a requirement to years 7 and 12 would not be helpful and would not assist housing delivery. Rather, SESplan submits that the Proposed Plan provides a housing land supply sufficient for between 16 and 21 years. To specify a requirement to years 7 and 12 could, in the current economic climate, commit SESplan to a potentially undeliverable figure. They submit that the proposed Plan contains an existing supply of housing land for 121,000 houses, much of which is identified in existing

structure and local plans and is programmed to come forward in the first two plan periods.

- 3.17 In terms of specific East Lothian issues, SESPlan notes that the identification of specific locations for development will be a matter for the East Lothian Local Development Plan. SESplan advises that the North Berwick area has been excluded from the East Lothian Spatial Development Area on the grounds of a significant foul drainage capacity issue. The Ormiston area is excluded on the basis of its relative lack of accessibility and education capacity and a local road network not suitable to accommodate strategic growth.

#### *Next Steps*

- 3.18 The SESplan Project Manager's assessment of all the representations made against the Proposed Plan, together with a recommended response to them (the Schedule 4's), will be put to the SESplan Joint Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Copies of these Schedule 4's, together with a Housing Land Schedule 4 Supporting Paper, are available for inspection in member's offices.
- 3.19 Consequently, if SESplan approves the Schedule 4's without requiring any modification to the Proposed Plan then given this Council's agreed position (para 3.5 above) there will be no need for the Council to ratify SESplan's decision. Ratification would only be required if SESplan agrees to make modifications.
- 3.20 When finally approved, either with or without modification, the Schedule 4's will be forwarded to the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) and will form the basis of the SESplan case at Examination. Scottish Ministers will consider the report of the Examination and then approve the Plan, with any modifications they deem appropriate.
- 3.21 SESplan's Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland will then supersede the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan 2015, the Scottish Borders Structure Plan and the relevant parts of the Fife Structure Plan.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The approved Strategic Development Plan will have implications for the Council's land use planning policy as provided for in its forthcoming East Lothian Local Development Plan.

## **5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial - none
- 6.2 Personnel - none
- 6.3 Other - none

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 SESplan Proposed Plan, November 2011
- 7.2 Report by Executive Director of Environment to East Lothian Council, 23 August 2011, *South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan: Ratification of Proposed Plan and Action Programme*
- 7.3 Report by Executive Director of Environment to East Lothian Council, 28 February 2012, *SESplan: Proposed Changes to Governance Scheme and Proposed Operating Budget 2012/13*
- 7.4 SESplan Proposed Plan, *Schedule of Representations and Unresolved Issues*
- 7.5 SESplan Proposed Plan, *Housing Land Schedule 4 Supporting Paper*

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