

# Planning Committee

2.00pm, Wednesday, 26 February 2020

## Regional Spatial Strategy, City Region Deal Regional Growth Framework and National Planning Framework 4

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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 1.1.1 notes the response of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Executive Board to the proposed South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SESplan) Joint Committee proposals to provide a coordinating function and planning input to the preparation of a Regional Growth Framework for the City Region Deal and a Regional Spatial Strategy for the south east Scotland area in respect of the Scottish Government's preparation of a draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4);
  - 1.1.2 agrees that the Council should work with the other SESPlan authorities to prepare the above documents; and
  - 1.1.3 note that these working arrangements will be reviewed in relation to outcomes of the Scottish Government's work on NPF4 and provisions for Regional Spatial Strategy working.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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## Regional Spatial Strategy, City Region Deal Regional Growth Framework and National Planning Framework 4

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 At its meeting on [2 October 2019](#) the Planning Committee noted and agreed the SESPlan Joint Committee proposal that the SESplan Project Board would provide a coordinating planning function for development of a Regional Growth Framework for the City Region Deal and a Regional Spatial Strategy and input to NPF4, subject to a Member Oversight Committee. These arrangements would be in place until the Scottish Government's publication of guidance on the processes for Regional Spatial Strategies. The Convenor of the SESplan Joint Committee would write to the City Region Deal Executive Board to have the proposed arrangements confirmed.
- 2.2 On 13 January 2020 the Chair of the City Region Deal responded to confirm the role of the Project Board and Member Oversight Committee, which should scrutinise and advise the main outputs of officer work.
- 2.3 This provides for input to both Regional Growth Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy. The latter needs to be progressed for submission to the Scottish Government for consideration as the area's input to a draft NPF4 by 31 March 2020.
- 2.4 The project work will be reported back to Planning Committee.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 SESplan is the statutory Strategic Development Planning Authority for South East Scotland, a partnership of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Fife, Scottish Borders and West Lothian for strategic development planning matters.
- 3.2 SESplan's key role is to prepare and maintain an up to date Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the South East Scotland area, to set out a vision for the long-term development of the city region and deal with cross boundary issues such as housing and transport. The first SDP was approved by Scottish Ministers on 27 June 2013, requiring review within four years of approval. A Proposed Plan was submitted on 26 July 2017 for Examination, which concluded on 20 July 2018. A

report of recommendations was then submitted to Scottish Ministers, who rejected it on 13 May 2019. SESplan remains the statutory body with a duty to prepare a strategic development plan for the area, although the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 provides for a replacement of that strategic planning regime in due course and this leaves insufficient time to prepare a new SDP.

- 3.4 Operation of the SESplan authority is subject to ratification by the constituent authorities.
- 3.5 The changes mentioned in 3.3 above mean that statutory strategic plans and the authorities responsible for them will be abolished, likely to be when NPF4 is approved by Parliament for publication as a statutory part of the development plan. Strategic development plans will be replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies. Whilst these will not be a statutory part of the Development Plan, there is requirement for the NPF to have regard to the content of them. The Scottish Government's work programme schedules publication of guidance on Regional Spatial Strategies for Quarter 4 of 2021, with acceptance that there will be none approved before the draft of NPF4 and its subsequent consultation process.
- 3.6 The Scottish Government has therefore requested that planning authorities work on draft proposals for Regional Spatial Strategies to inform draft NPF4, scheduled to be published in Quarter 3 of 2020. The Council therefore needs to be part of the proposed joint working considered and noted by the SESplan Joint Committee and Planning Committee, continuing with SESplan until permanent and formal governance arrangements are agreed in accordance with secondary legislation and Scottish Government guidance.

## **4. Main report**

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- 4.1 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 sets out a requirement for all Local Authorities, either individually or collectively, to produce a Regional Spatial Strategy for the area which it covers.
- 4.2 A Regional Spatial Strategy needs to be taken into account by the development plan and under the above Act the statutory Development Plan is made up of the NPF and LDP.
- 4.3 The NPF would also take account of other strategies across the area.
- 4.4 On 25 November 2019, the SESplan Joint Committee discussed and noted the proposal that the existing SESplan authorities (East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Edinburgh, Borders and Fife Councils) should work together on the development of an Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of Scotland.
- 4.5 A letter of 3 December 2019 from the Scottish Government's Chief Planning Officer (Appendix 1) to all Local Authority Chief Executives set out possible groupings of authorities for joint working on development of Regional Spatial Strategies and NPF4.

- 4.6 The timescales set out in the letter for response meant that officers have indicated that the likely approach would be to work on the basis of the existing SESplan grouping, reflecting the recent decision of the City Region Deal Joint Committee to begin work on the production of a Regional Growth Framework. This decision, and the input of the SESplan Project Board with a Member Oversight Group, was agreed by Planning Committee at its meeting of 2 October 2019.
- 4.7 The joint working arrangements are that the SESplan Project Board and Joint Committee would provide planning input to the City Region Deal processes and inform both the Regional Growth Framework and the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 4.8 On 13 January 2020 the Chair of the City Region Deal Joint Committee responded to the SESplan proposed working arrangements to confirm that:
- 4.8.1 the SESplan Officer Board is to act as a strategic spatial planning consultative board for the development of the Regional Growth Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy; and
- 4.8.2 individual local authorities will require to consider the Terms of Reference for the Elected Member Oversight Group. That report will contain a revised governance diagram with Strategic Spatial Planning sitting across all themes and reaffirming the Elected Member Oversight Group role in scrutinising officer work and advising the City Region Deal Joint Committee regarding the Regional Growth Framework and Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 4.9 SESplan Project Board and Operational Group will therefore work towards producing the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Growth Framework for the end of March 2020.
- 4.10 Planning Committee will be kept informed during this work process so as to of developing both documents and both should be presented to the SESplan Joint Committee and the Planning Committee to ensure input to NPF4 is approved.
- 4.11 Also, the Council needs to consider its own input to NPF4, particularly as part of the content will be a revised Scottish Planning Policy and another part will be housing targets, both of which the Council should have substantive input to. This may require a special Planning Committee to be held in March 2020 to ensure the Scottish Government's deadline of 31 March 2020 is met.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 The decision on this report will be reported back to the SESplan Project Board and Joint Committee, to the Chief Planner of the Scottish Government and, as relevant, to the NPF consultation.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There is no budgetary impact in this financial year as all SESplan work is currently being carried out by the Project Board and Operational Group and operating costs are being met from SESplan reserves.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There is no community impact arising from the report and no requirement for community consultation on the arrangements proposed.
- 7.2 There are no equalities, health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.
- 7.3 There are no carbon impacts, climate change adaption or sustainable development impacts arising from this report.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 Report to Planning Committee [2 October 2019](#) Regional Planning in South East Scotland
- 8.2 Letter of [13 January 2020](#) from the Chair of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee to SESplan Joint Committee
- 8.3 [NPF4 Programme for Engagement](#)

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Letter of 3 December 2019 from the Scottish Government Chief Planner.



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To: All Local Authority Chief Executives

3 December 2019

Dear Colleagues,

## NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 – REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS

I am very grateful to those authorities who have already confirmed whether they are willing to work in a regional grouping to prepare an indicative regional spatial strategy to feed into National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). I understand that other authorities are still considering their approach, and look forward to hearing from them in due course.

I wanted to take this opportunity to reiterate that it is for authorities themselves to decide the arrangements that will work best for them.

Our approach has been designed to develop capacity through collaborative working. We believe that involvement now will help to prepare authorities for when the statutory duty comes into force and will also ensure that NPF4 accurately reflects your shared priorities. However, there is no obligation to participate in this way at this stage, and the list of areas that I suggested in my previous letter aimed to move forward our collective thinking and discussion, rather than prescribing any particular approach.

As set out in my letter, some funding has been allocated from the Scottish Government's Planning Development budget to support the regional groupings that come forward. The actual funding available to each grouping will depend on the final number of regions that emerge, but I expect that it can go some way towards facilitating a participative event on strategic planning during the early engagement of NPF4 for each region. Once we have had confirmation of the proposed approach from all authorities, we will finalise arrangements for making the funding available, and I hope this can be achieved before Christmas, so that future events can be programmed into the early engagement period. Please note that this funding is being provided outwith the normal COSLA/Scottish Government arrangements for distribution of funding.

This is an exciting time for strategic planning in Scotland, and a great opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of a new, more collaborative approach to planning. We look forward to working constructively and collaboratively with you on this in the coming months.

Yours faithfully

John McNairney  
Chief Planner

