

**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
22 JANUARY 2001**

REPORT ON: SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PILOT AUDIT

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 20-2001

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the results of the Pilot Audit of the Council's Development Plan function carried out by the Scottish Executive in January 2000.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the conclusions of the Pilot Audit.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Local Agenda 21 implications of this report cover a very wide range of key themes, in particular the transportation implications for new developments affect issues of sustainable development, the efficient use of resources and minimising of waste and access to facilities, services, goods and people is not achieved at the expense of the environment and are accessible to all.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No equal opportunity implications are associated with this report.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 In January 2000 the Scottish Executive Planning Audit Unit carried out a review of the Development Planning procedures followed by Dundee City Council as part of the Pilot Audit of Councils across Scotland. The other Councils included in the Pilot exercise were Angus Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council covering a mix of urban and rural areas.
- 6.2 This Audit followed on a similar Audit of Development control procedures in local authorities previously carried out as part of the Executive's reviews of the efficiency of planning services across Scotland.
- 6.3 The Audit consisted of a comprehensive review of the Councils' Statutory Development Plan documents comprising of the Tayside Structure Plan approved in 1997, the Dundee Local Plan adopted in 1998 and the Urban Nature Conservation Subject Local Plan adopted in 1995. In addition, individual interview were carried out with members of staff at all levels engaged in the Development Planning process.

- 6.4 The Audit concentrated on a number of key areas mainly, Organisation, Process, Product and Performance. A copy of the full report is available in the Members' Lounges for information, however the following summary identifies the main conclusions with respect to the situation in Dundee.
- Management and organisation of development planning is undertaken in a firm but fair manner.
 - There were concerns among staff about the future Joint Structure Plan process as, at that stage, no experience had so far been gained with respect to joint working and the potential difficulties inherent with it.
 - There were advantages in the review of both Structure and Local Plans together but this would have implications for the demands on staff and already limited resources.
 - While the Tayside Structure Plan was comprehensive, reliable, clearly written and contains straightforward policies, it is over detailed and the presentation dense.
 - The Dundee Local Plan was produced relatively quickly and provides a reasonable basis for planning at the moment, however it is too comprehensive, but re-evaluated and slimmed down could form a good base for the future replacement plan. There was also a need for it to be more positive in encouraging development.

7 NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 As a result of the pilot exercise the Audit Unit concluded that:
- There would be benefits to both the Scottish Executive and to individual authorities to continue examining development planning.
 - The Audit process should continue, but be selective and concentrate only on those authorities whose performance was poor.
 - After a year the pilot authorities should be re-visited to check on their progress and to assess performance.
- 7.2 As a follow up to this the Minister for Environment, Sport and Culture, Sam Galbraith MSP, announced at the RTPi conference in November 2000 that three further audits would take place in the next year covering Falkirk, North Ayrshire and Perth & Kinross Councils which would include the Development Control as well as the Development Planning processes.

8 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, Director of Corporate Planning, have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Development Plan Pilot Audit Report, Scottish Executive Development Department, September 2000.

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12 January 2001

KW/IJ/KR LP1 & SP5/1

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