
SESPLAN JOINT COMMITTEE

Report by Director of Infrastructure & Environment

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 October 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report seeks ratification of the decisions of the SESplan Joint Committee at its meeting on 4 October 2021 relating to the formal cessation of meetings of the Committee and the finalisation of its budget. The report also updates Members on the new arrangements for spatial planning in Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland.**
- 1.2 The SESplan Joint Committee considered two reports at its meeting on 4 October relating to:
1. Transfer of regional spatial planning responsibilities and cessation of SESplan, and
 2. Final accounts, audit report and closing financial statement
- 1.3 The reports are attached as Appendix A and these set out the background to the changing arrangements for spatial planning in the South East of Scotland as a consequence of the legislative change being introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The recommendations of both reports were agreed unanimously. This report is brought to Council to note the changes and to ratify those decisions.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **I recommend that Council:**

- (a) **Note that the responsibilities for Regional Spatial Planning have transferred from the SESplan Joint Committee to the City Deal Elected Member Oversight Committee;**
- (b) **Agree that there shall be no further meetings of the SESplan Joint Committee and that the Committee's constitution be amended to remove the requirement to meet twice annually;**
- (c) **Agrees the SESplan final accounts and the return the remaining balances to the six SESplan Local Authorities.**

- (d) Agrees that to support regional spatial planning work part of the remaining SESplan funding balance should be used to appoint a Planning Officer, on a part-time, time limited basis, to provide a strategic planning capability within the City Region Deal Programme Management Office (PMO); and**
- (d) Note that the existing SESPlan Project Board (officer working group) should be renamed the Strategic Planning Advisory Group with the chair of that group becoming a member of the City Region Deal Directors Group.**

3 Background

- 3.1 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 removes the requirement to prepare strategic development plans; repealing Sections 4 to 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. However, SESplan remains a legal entity until National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) comes into force.
- 3.2 The Joint Committee report noted at 1.2.1 outlines the series of transitional arrangements that have been put in place to manage spatial planning for the south east of Scotland moving forward. This has involved integrating spatial planning into the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESES CRD) governance framework. An Elected Member Oversight Committee (EMOC) under the City Deal Joint Committee has been formed that has oversight and scrutiny of the Regional Prosperity Framework, the Regional Spatial Strategy and the work of the SESplan Officer Board (now retitled as the Spatial Planning Advisory Group). It is proposed that the chair of this group will now sit on the Directors Group of the City Deal.
- 3.3 In view of these changes, the SESplan Joint Committee agreed that there was no longer any practicable reason or statutory imperative for it to continue to meet. As the constitution of SESplan requires that the Joint Committee meet at least twice a year, it was agreed that this should be formally amended to remove the requirement to meet. This decision now needs ratification by each of the member authorities.
- 3.4 The joint Committee also agreed to finalise its accounts and return the remaining budget to each of the member authorities with the proviso that a total of £66k (£11k for each authority) is utilised for the creation of a part time post to provide a strategic planning capability within the City Region Deal Programme Management Office (PMO). This acknowledges that there remains a requirement for a significant amount of strategic planning input into national, regional and local economic development and planning policy development and implementation.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

Following the transfer of Regional Spatial Planning responsibilities from the SESplan Joint Committee to the City Deal Elected Members Oversight Committee and the cessation of the SESplan Joint Committee the Council's share of the remaining amount in the SESplan account is £16.8k. It is proposed that a part time planning officer is employed within the City Region Deal Programme Management Office (PMO) to provide a strategic planning capability and £11k of the Council's remaining SESplan account balance is contributed towards the funding of this, with the remaining £5.8k being returned to the Council.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations

Whilst the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, once the relevant provisions are enacted, will remove the need to produce a Strategic Development Plan, there will still be an obligation to work collaboratively in the production of a Regional Spatial Strategy. The governance arrangements for spatial

planning have now been agreed and are outlined in the accompanying Appendix A.

There is an on-going commitment of staff resources to the participation in the Spatial Planning Advisory Group and the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy and this will be provided within the existing establishment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

There are no direct adverse equality implications arising from this report

4.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

There are no direct economic, social or environmental effects arising from this report. However, the continued involvement in regional spatial planning and the provision of a resource within the PMO, will enable delivery against a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 & 15) through the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy and integration within the City Deal governance structure.

4.5 **Climate Change**

There are no effects on carbon emissions arising from this report. However, continued participation in development of the Regional Spatial Strategy and integration within the City Deal governance structure will assist in developing key strategic policy framework for the delivery of climate change objections of national and local government.

4.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

4.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

4.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes required to the Council's Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

5 **CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report

Approved by

Name
Title

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
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Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: None

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