
ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY PLANNING
MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

18th APRIL 2007

**STRATEGIC ASSET PLANNING – DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY
PLANNING APPROACH**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Following a presentation to the Community Planning Management Committee on 6 December 2006, Nick Allan, the Council's Corporate Asset Manager was requested to undertake the following tasks on behalf of the Partnership and to report back on progress made. These tasks were :-

- To investigate the establishment of a group within the CPP capable of dealing with strategic asset management issues and developing joint planning arrangements to reflect Scottish Executive initiatives.
- To identify key individuals from within the CPP and CHP networks to form the core of this group.
- To examine other examples of joint asset management planning within the public sector in Scotland.

The report provides an update on progress to date.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Management Committee notes the importance and appropriateness of adopting a joint strategic approach to asset management planning within the Partnership.

2.2 That the Management Committee agrees to the establishment of the Argyll and Bute Public Sector Asset Development Group, under the initial direction of George Harper, the Council's Director of Development.

- 2.3 That this Group be tasked with setting out its draft terms of reference and operating proposals and submit these to a future meeting of the Management Committee for approval.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 6th December 2006 the Management Committee was asked to note that there were several very strong messages within the efficient government agenda being sent to all public bodies by the Scottish Executive each with an underlying theme around the need to develop more strategic asset management and joint planning arrangements.
- 3.2 The SEERAD “On the Ground” Initiative and the emerging “Hub Initiative” are just two well documented examples of Scottish Executive proposals that require joint planning and collaboration within the public sector. The “Hub Initiative” in particular would also seek to place considerable responsibilities for joint asset planning on the Scottish Community Planning framework, all be it at a wider regional level.
- 3.3 It is understood that the division within the Scottish Executive with responsibility for promoting the efficient government and shared services agenda will launch a major study after the May elections to examine the role of strategic asset management and joint planning to support the delivery of this agenda. It is anticipated that this study will place stringent requirements on public services to increasingly demonstrate more effective joint planning arrangements.
- 3.4 Between January and March 2007 a series of meetings were organised by the Councils’ Corporate Asset Manager to meet managers and practitioners dealing with property asset development in member organisations to inform them of developments in asset planning at a national level and establish broad support for the benefits through joint asset planning across the CPP and CHP networks. In addition these meetings provided an opportunity to identify potential key participants from member organisations who might form the initial members a Public Sector Asset Development Group created within the Partnership. The participants in these discussions are listed in **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.5 Representatives from other organisations within the Partnership wishing to participate in the initiative but not covered under this series of initial meetings may join the Asset Development Group once it has been established.
- 3.6 Within Argyll and Bute some examples of localised joint working within the property field already exist, such as the SEERAD “family”, and it is not intended that the Public Sector Asset Development Group interfere

with the actions of these existing networks. Rather, it is envisaged that by providing an operating framework within the Community Planning Partnership with its wide strategic context, greater sharing of information will be promoted creating added opportunities for delivering wider community benefits.

- 3.7 It is proposed that initially the Public Sector Asset Development Group be set up under the leadership of the Council's Director of Development, supported by his Corporate Asset Manager. The initial tasks will be to prepare an Initial Project Brief for the Group for its first year of operation, to define the approach to be taken to achieve this Brief, to identify the risks and challenges, to specify the roles, responsibilities and action requirements for each member of the Group, and to seek authorisation for the Brief from the Management Committee. The Group will report to the Management Committee with the Initial Brief and subsequently at the end of its first year of operation on its success in meeting the defined outputs thus defined. It is envisaged that arrangements for ongoing Leadership of the Group should be reviewed at the completion of this first year.

4 Examples of Current Joint Asset Planning Initiatives

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Asset Manager is investigating examples of best practice elsewhere in Scotland to inform the effective development of assets by Community Planning Partners. He is a member of the Asset Based Information Delivery Group (ABIDG) set up by the Scottish Executive to develop a toolkit to assist the Public Sector in the gathering and sharing property information to support the process of strategic joint asset management planning. His continued work with the ABIDG has identified centres of positive action, and will be of assistance to the Partnership's Public Sector Asset Development Group as it sets out its work plan for the next 12 months, and beyond.

- 4.2 So far this year two examples of joint asset management planning within the Public Sector in Scotland, have been investigated. These are:-

- The Dumfries and Galloway model
- The Grampian model

In Dumfries and Galloway the Local Authority and Health Board have developed a shared property information system that has led to more meaningful and constructive discussions on joint planning, but development is at an early state and tangible outcomes have yet to be achieved.

In Grampian, the work of the North East Scotland Public Sector Property Group has been examined. It is a more established and complex model than that in Dumfries and Galloway, involving nine principal partners across three local authority areas.

A summary of his initial findings are detailed in **Appendix 2** and it is intended that both these models be looked at in more detail within the Asset Development Group work streams as one of its initial tasks.

- 4.3 It is important that the Asset Development Group takes cognisance of current and programmed property initiatives by Partners, such as the development of an office rationalisation programme by the Council, as it moves forward with its asset development work.

5. IMPLICATIONS

POLICY	Draft Community Plan 2007-12, Argyll and Bute Council's Asset Management Strategy.
FINANCIAL	None
PERSONNEL	Members will be asked to commit resources to the Asset Development Group and report back to their own organisations on implications and opportunities for their individual public services
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	None
LEGAL	None

For further information please contact Nick Allan, the Council's Corporate Asset Manager on 01436 658950

Dave Duthie
Head of Transportation and Infrastructure
Kilmory, Lochgilphead
30 March 2007

Tel: 01546 604689

APPENDIX 1**Discussion network**

Bill Brackenridge	Chair, Argyll and Bute CHP
Fiona Ritchie	General Manager, Argyll and Bute CHP
Sue Gledhill	Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Argyll and the Islands)
David Blair	Head of Capital, NHS Highland
Andrew Campbell	Area Manager, SNH
Douglas Anderson	Property Services Manager, Strathclyde Police
Murdina Macdonald	Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Argyll and the Islands)
Nick Purdy	District Manager, Forestry Commission Scotland
Peter Watson	Area Manager, SEPA
Bill Dundas	SEERAD
John Allan	Dunbartonshire Economic Forum – Construction Alliance
Stephen Wilson	Project Manager, NHS Highland
David Ross	Service Planning Manager, NHS Highland

APPENDIX 2

OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH EAST SCOTLAND PUBLIC SECTOR PROPERTY GROUP

**BY NICK ALLAN
CORPORATE ASSET MANAGER
MARCH 2007**

Introduction

The North East Scotland Public Sector Property Group was formed in November 2001. Membership of the group consists of:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Grampian Fire and Rescue Service
- Grampian Police
- NHS Grampian
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- The Moray Council
- The Robert Gordon University
- The University of Aberdeen.

The purpose of the North East Scotland Public Sector Property Group (NESPPG) is to support the delivery of service strategies, support the achievement of Joint Futures and to serve as a link between local and national public sector agencies to achieve joint working within the property remit. The aim is to deliver a capital base providing value for money and to encourage innovation and ultimately free capital/revenue resources from property to better support the delivery of the service strategy.

The key objectives of the group are to form a common database of owned/leased property and land which is available and accessible to all members of the group. This will allow them to integrate all property strategies in order to form a joint (high level) property strategy and establish cross sector costs, and set benchmarks for property and management costs in order to establish models of best practice. Other key objectives include joint consideration of property development and regeneration, sharing knowledge and enterprise, creating awareness of the impact which local plans have on capital assets and to develop agreed space standards of the organisations that wish to co-locate.

Challenges

In meeting their aims and objectives the NESJPG have come across many challenges of which they have worked hard to overcome, these include:

- Encouraging people to speak openly about work which they are doing/planning with the knowledge that the information shared will be kept confidential. It took many months to reach a point where participants were comfortable to sharing restricted information with colleagues from other sectors.

This was overcome by the adoption of Chatham House Rules that governs the confidentiality of the source of information received at a meeting. Confidence was also gained by practical delivery.

- There was particular concern with how meetings were minuted.

This was overcome by an agreement from all members of the group on how the minutes were formatted and documented.

- Differences in personalities and procedures.
- Having the right representatives from each organisation on each topic, resulting in continuous changes in personnel.

Representatives now introduce themselves at each meeting giving details of their roles and responsibilities within their own organisation as well as their knowledge and experience.

- There were concerns of complications which might arise regarding “how exactly different organisations share facilities?” Practical difficulties included spatial needs, physical organisational needs (e.g. their own front door) and local standards;
- Varying levels of knowledge and experience created difficulties, as some organisations were further advanced in their understanding and use of GIS and property management systems than others. This made it difficult for organisations to share information; there were similar problems with the use of UPRN’s and the Gazetteer;
- Restrictions of internal financial orders within local authorities that might prevent an agreement to sell properties to another organisation in the NESJPG, as it could be established on an individual basis that property was not being sold at its full market value;

- Differences in organisations needs and priorities. For example, local authorities have a concern in some circumstances of what the market value of a building might be whereas this may be of less of a concern to other organisations;
- It has to be accepted that not all departments/service functions are able to integrate with one another and specific needs and operational synergies need to be taken into account.
- There is still uncertainty within the NESPPG on how to tackle larger scale projects; however the group is working towards this.
- Problems have been experienced due to the natural turnover of group members resulting from changes of job and retirement.

Delivered Projects

Projects, which have now been delivered from the group, include:

Torry Neighbourhood Centre, Aberdeen – Co-location of three separate General Practitioner Practices, a range of NHS services, Social Services and the Police. The property includes an integrated reception and facilities infrastructure, which contributes to the success of multi-user buildings;

Garthdee Community Medical Centre – The site was originally owned by Aberdeen City Council but is now hosted by Robert Gordon University as a Third Party Developer. The NHS leased premises co-locates a General Practitioner Practice and a range of NHS services;

Skene Healthcare Centre, Westhill, Aberdeenshire – Hosted by a Third party Developer and funded by the NHS this leased premises is situated in a commercial setting adjoining office and shopping developments on the edge of an expanding township. The property includes an integrated reception and facilities infrastructure, which contributes to the success of multi-user buildings;

Old Aberdeen Medical Practice, Aberdeen – Hosted by the University of Aberdeen as a Third Party Developer, the NHS has leased premises to co-locate a General Practitioner Practice and a range of NHS services;

Memorandum of Understanding – between Emergency Service Partners with the presumption to look at opportunities at co-locating within communities;

Shared Development, Alford – Combined Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Station at Alford;

Land Potential – Aberdeen Council owns land that could potentially facilitate new integrated dental facilities in Banff and Fraserburgh and community medical centres in Oldmeldrum, Fyvie, Kemnay and Ellon;

Police Relocation – Grampian Police have relocated to Dyce Primary School;

A Central Purchasing Unit – This Unit is now serving Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils;

Police and Scottish Ambulance Service – Are now sharing Facilities at Kincorth, Ballater, Tomintoul and Banchory;

Aberdeenshire Council - Has leased an office in Kintore to Grampian Police allowing them to dispose of their former Police Station.

Aberdeenshire Council and Grampian Police - Have resolved the need for new facilities at Portlethen.

Accommodation Insh - Aberdeenshire Council has leased accommodation to Grampian Police at Insh to provide a “new” Police Station.

Attributes

There have been a great number of procedures and initiatives that the NESJPSG have put in place which resulted in the success of the small projects, these were:

- Regular meetings, usually every 6-8 weeks;
- A representative from NHS Grampian chairs the meeting, which allowed things to move along, and further meetings were arranged as a result of this;
- When the Outline Business Case is being developed for new build projects, the specification is then sent out to each individual member of the group in order that they are aware of the new development or to see if they are interested in taking part;
- Effective networking and communication, lines of communication are now in place that did not previously exist. This now allows members to contact one another on a specific issue without having to wait for the next meeting;
- Administration is shared between the group and there is a basic structure which has been put in place;
- Simplifying leasing and service level agreements, avoiding solicitors;
- The delivery of small projects to start with – *“Not trying too much too soon”*.

Disappointments

The NESJPG also tried putting in practice a very small number of processes, which were not successful, these were:

- The formation of a rating sub-group which failed due to conflicting priorities of group members on issues such as residential rates.
- Involvement of the universities proved unsuccessful due to their own particular interests.

Nick Allan
Corporate Asset Manager
Argyll and Bute Council
March 2007