



17th March 2007

National Planning Framework Team
Freepost RRHE-GBSA-BJLR
Government Planning Directorate
Area 2-H
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

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Dear Sirs,

National Planning Framework for Scotland 2 – Discussion Draft

Representatives of the Aberdeenshire Council SNP Group having attended the recent National Planning Framework 2 seminar in Aberdeen, we wish to make the following submission:

Having considered those proposals which have been identified by you as being projects of national importance, the Aberdeenshire Council SNP Group takes the view that the National Planning Framework fails to take account of the crucial role that Aberdeen City and Shire will continue to play in the economic success of Scotland. Despite the unquestionable contribution which the North east of Scotland has made to the UK economy through the oil industry over the last thirty years, it is noted that the poor level of infrastructure development has been a considerable handicap to maximising its full potential.

That situation continues to threaten the future development of the area on a number of fronts of strategic national significance. It is in recognition of that fact that the Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Planning Committee were compelled to announce their proposal to investigate the development of the Aberdeen/Ellon/Peterhead corridor with the caveat that such development could be delayed due to the lack of adequate transport infrastructure.

A number of proposals are currently in hand or under way for infrastructure projects, which includes:

- The dualling of the A90 between Tipperty and Balmedie
- The construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- The runway extension at Aberdeen Airport
- The Aberdeen Cross-Rail project.

However, more needs to be done to improve the transport infrastructure of the North east, and the Aberdeenshire Council SNP Group feels that recognition must be given to the number of factors, present and future, which will contribute to that pressure:

- With only half the estimated North Sea reserves extracted to date and another 30 years of North Sea oil production forecast, the oil industry remains a crucial industry for the Scottish economy.
- Over 80% of the world's entire sub-sea oil expertise is centred on companies operating in Westhill, and some 60% of the world's sub-sea oil projects pass through Peterhead port.
- That notwithstanding, the decommissioning of the oil industry's obsolete installations will create a substantial industry in itself. Such operations will require non-tidal deep water port facilities and engineering services, which Peterhead is in a unique position to offer.
- Peterhead is also the largest white fish port in the UK, with a correspondingly high number of modern fish processing factories located throughout the North east, many of which are major exporters.
- The ancillary development of Peterhead as a cruise ship destination is beneficial to the economy, and contingent on an adequate infrastructure.
- One of the few possible benefits of global warming is likely to be the opening of the North west passage to shipping from around the northern hemisphere, which Peterhead and Aberdeen are ideally located to service.
- The loss of the world's first industrial carbon-capture plant to Abu Dhabi, however regrettable, does not obviate the fact that the Miller Field remains highly suited to such a project, and there is strong belief within the industry that the development of a carbon-capture plant at Boddam Power Station remains a likely prospect for the future.
- The prospect of planning approval being given for the Trump International Golf Links development at Balmedie would bring increased tourist traffic and the probability of attracting world-class golf tournaments.
- The indication that the new prison to replace HMP Craiginches and HMP Peterhead is likely to be built in the Peterhead/Hatton area.
- The proposal for the construction of an offshore wind farm in Aberdeen Bay.
- A number of these issues, and others, are recognised in the ASCEF *Energetica* project which, it is hoped, will also inform the National Planning Framework.

The Aberdeenshire Council SNP Group therefore calls for the development of the transport infrastructure within the Aberdeen/Ellon/Peterhead corridor, and improved access to it, to be recognised as a project of overall national significance. We therefore trust that your team will give our proposal their most earnest consideration, and look forward to receiving your most positive response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Rob Merson
SNP Group Spokesman on Planning & Economic Development