



Dundee & Angus
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

16 April 2008

Freepost RRHE-GBSA-BJLR
National Planning Framework Team
The Scottish Government Planning Directorate
Victoria Quay
Leith
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Dear Sir Madam

NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2 – DISCUSSION DRAFT

I have pleasure in enclosing a 'hard' copy of Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce's response to the above consultation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding our paper.

Yours faithfully



Alan Mitchell
Chief Executive

Enc.



DUNDEE & ANGUS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2 DISCUSSION DRAFT

Introduction

Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to sustainable economic growth. Achieving this laudable goal will only be achieved through capitalising on and fully exploiting the inherent strengths of every part of the country. Dundee and Angus can be a major driver of prosperity for Scotland.

Dundee and Angus: A Positive Story

Dundee and Angus is well positioned to tackle its own 'local' challenges (i.e. declining population, high levels of economic inactivity), and to make a significant contribution to making the whole of Scotland wealthier.

Its prime assets are:

- A global reputation in advanced medical research.
- Two world-class universities, two successful, innovative and internationally orientated colleges and the Scottish Crop Research Institute.
- A well developed and growing presence in life/bio sciences and interactive media/games. For example, "BioDundee" is already very successful global brand.
- It retains a broad business base. All of Scottish Enterprise's other Priority Industries (Financial Services, Tourism, Energy and Food and Drink) are well represented.
- In addition, it has maintained a strong manufacturing/engineering base, which is increasingly internationalising and moving up the value chain, and it has seen its reputation as a retail location soar in recent years.

By any definition, Dundee/Angus is already a well-developed 'knowledge economy'. This has been internationally recognised again with the nomination of Dundee for the second time as one of the world's most intelligent communities by a prestigious U.S. 'think tank'.

It is disappointing, therefore, that the Discussion Draft acknowledges some of these strengths, but fails to offer any real sense that the Scottish Government has clear vision of how it can develop them. None of Dundee and Angus's current strengths can be taken for granted because of the relentless pace of competition. Other cities and countries want the businesses, the prestige, the talented people, the science and the knowledge that Dundee and Angus has.

The Chamber and other key players in the local economy must take the lead and work together to ensure that we develop our strengths to their full advantage. But, Dundee and Angus cannot do it by itself, and the Scottish Government must have an active role. It must not undermine what we already have. For example, even within Scotland, the Government's focus on Edinburgh as a global biomedic centre has potentially damaging implications for the future of this sector in Dundee.

The Scottish Government's Role

There are two areas where the Scottish Government's intervention will be critical.

First, through **investment in higher and further education**, it can sustain the knowledge economy on which we increasingly depend. Dundee and Angus has already demonstrated the potential to secure global leadership in young and evolving sectors, particularly life sciences and interactive media. The region's HE/FE institutions need capacity building investment to maintain the skills and knowledge base that are a pre-requisite for future global success.

Second, and very relevant to this consultation, through **investment in transport infrastructure**. The Discussion Draft gets it absolutely right when it says that "competitive places" are "well connected". In the case of Dundee/Angus, that means connectivity to the rest of Scotland, the UK and globally.

We do not object to the National Developments that are already planned. Glasgow and Edinburgh are major engines of the Scottish economy. The wealth that they create has to be shared, and this needs better transport links with Dundee and Angus.

So, given the need for better "connectivity" generally and better links with Glasgow/Edinburgh specifically, there is a strong case for making two additions to the current list of National Developments:

- *East Coast Mainline* – investment in the line between Edinburgh to Aberdeen, plus the upgrade of line generally to reduce travel times to London and South East England.
- *Dundee Port* – there is significant development potential, including transforming it into a base for a major renewable energy centre, and an in-port rail terminal to enhance rail transport in the city and create tri-modal freight hub.

In addition, we would like to see two further projects supported. Dundee Airport can play a significant role in opening up improved connectivity across the UK and beyond. It is not of a comparable scale to Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports, but there is no reason why the successful services currently operated out of Dundee should not be reinforced to a comparable extent to those at Aberdeen Airport, which has experienced significant growth in recent years. This is a key area which the Chamber would wish to see better supported within a national framework, and through Government funding.

As well as investment in the East Coast Mainline to reduce journey times to Edinburgh and onwards to England, we would like to see more frequent and faster 'regular' train services to Glasgow and Edinburgh. If regular 'bullet trains' are the ambition for Glasgow/Edinburgh, they should similarly be an ambition for Dundee and Angus.

Summary

We welcome the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2. It is the right approach. If it succeeds in giving Scotland a joined up, coherent and strategic approach to infrastructure investment and development, and allows for national and local planning policies to be better aligned with infrastructure decisions then it will make a significant contribution to growing Scotland's economy and making Scotland a better place to do business.

But, the devil will be in the detail and the Discussion Draft shows that much thinking still needs to be done. Dundee and Angus, with the right support from the Scottish Government, can be a significant driver of Scottish prosperity, but it is not apparent from the current document that the Government has fully grasped the opportunities. We hope that our comments help stimulate further thought and ideas. Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce and its members stand ready to engage with local partners and the Scottish Government to move the wealth-creating agenda forward.

APRIL 2008