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REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD – 29 MAY 2008

SUBJECT: THE CO-ORDINATION OF MAJOR COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNER PROJECTS

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Some time ago, it became apparent that the various public agencies in Moray were planning substantial capital developments over the next ten years and that there were considerable risks attached to the lack of co-ordination in this area.
- 1.2 Subsequently a volume of work was carried out by the community planning partnership which showed that there would be benefits to all agencies if the programme was co-ordinated and that efficiencies and opportunities might arise through this approach.
- 1.3 This report sets out the process by which such benefits can be developed to produce practical outcomes. This would in turn be by means of a Master Plan and associated Action Plan.

2. Scoping Report - Overview

- 2.1 Discussions have taken place between officials representing The Council, HIE Moray, NHS Grampian, and Moray College, to prepare a Scoping Report for this project, to be agreed by Community Planning Partners, prior to the preparation of a detailed Brief to be used in the commissioning of consultants.
- 2.2 It is envisaged that the Scoping Report will be tested and developed at a 'Visioning Seminar', to be run by a professional facilitator, whose role would be to stimulate debate amongst representatives of the partner organisations. Invitations would also be extended to include wider representation from the Community Planning Partnership. The intention is to establish a widely based 'consensus' for the project, at its inception. The 'vision' would include a joined up, collaborative approach. The Visioning Seminar is outlined further in Section 3 of this report.
- 2.3 Subsequent to agreement being reached amongst the Community Planning Partners, the Brief would then be finalised, and arrangements made to commission the consultants.

- 2.4 The Brief would acknowledge the key documents informing future development, namely Moray 2020, The Town Promotion and Development Project (The Donaldson Study), The Moray Development Plan and Moray Community Plan.
- 2.5 The main features of this project are as follows:
- 2.5.1 The outcomes which the commission would be expected to deliver are
- (1) A Master Plan, indicating sites for buildings and facilities which Community Planning Partners, including Council departments, and the private sector, have identified and
 - (2) A related Action Plan, which would indicate a delivery programme of projects, organisations responsible for delivery, funding, and timescales.
- 2.5.2 The issues which the study would address are the implications of the aforementioned programme for land use planning; economic development; transportation and parking; urban design, and open space; sustainability; and feasibility. (The details of feasibility of projects would be matters for the individual Partners to establish).
- 2.5.3 The outcomes would result from an analysis by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants, under a lead consultant, with expertise in these disciplines, engaging with the public and private sectors. (A significant element would involve negotiations with private sector property interests, and with Community Plan Partners, to establish how land uses can be optimised). Council interests are likely to comprise Planning, Estates, Transportation, Libraries, Education, Housing, Contaminated Land, Legal, Finance and External Funding).
- 2.5.4 Given the wide range of interests and issues involved, the management of the project will require to be flexible and responsive, on a day to day basis. In order to ensure optimum 'added value', it is intended that the project manager and small core team will have a 'hands on' approach, working with the consultant team. This is essential, so that problems are addressed as they arise, and to avoid the Final Report simply telling the clients what they already know. Whilst it is envisaged that management of the project will be by a Steering Group, reporting for key decisions through the Community Planning Theme Group/ Board, this matter will require further consideration.
- 2.5.5 Financial contributions have to be considered further and formalised, but on the basis of discussions to date, of the total estimated direct project cost (ie. the fee payable to the consultants exclusive of VAT) of £135,000, HIE Moray would contribute £100,000 or thereby, the equivalent of £25,000 of a Council official's time would be accepted to lead the project, in managing preparation of the Brief and commissioning the consultants, and thereafter managing the Project Team. It has been agreed by the principal funding partners that David Duncan, Principal Planning Officer (Planning and Development) would undertake this role.

- 2.5.6 Contributions towards the balance would be a matter for negotiation with Community Planning Partners including the Council, but informal discussions with NHS Grampian and Moray College indicate that they would 'in principle' contribute, the extent to be based on likely benefits.
- 2.5.7 The foregoing figures do not include allowance for payment of consultancy fees for assessment of the transportation implications of development proposals by partners and private commercial interests. Such an assessment will be fundamental to the success and credibility of the Master Plan and Action Plan.
- 2.5.8 Preliminary discussion with the Council's Transportation Manager has indicated that there is a need to address issues of: a budget for this additional advice; the likely extent of this requirement; how this consultancy would be procured in relation to the principal consultancy commission; and how it would be funded. (It would be reasonable to expect that this would also be on a proportional basis, to reflect the benefits of assessing proposals generated by partners).
- 2.5.9 HIE have agreed to consider use of their dedicated Procurement Unit.
- 2.5.10 In terms of timescales, it is estimated that a project of this significance would realistically take at least six months to report from inception. This can be clarified with consultants once the Brief has been drafted.
- 2.5.11 The preparation of the Brief can proceed in parallel with preparatory work on the Visioning Seminar, and thereby avoid delay.

3. The Visioning Seminar

- 3.1 The Seminar is intended to bring together Community Planning Partners in order to discuss the practical benefits of sharing, integrating and co-ordinating information on their respective development plans, in so far as these have economic development, land use planning, and transportation implications. (It is clear that an essential component will also involve engagement with private sector commercial interests and landowners).
- 3.2 A central objective of the event is to establish consensus between the partners as to the scope of the project, and the subsequent consultancy commission.
- 3.3 The relationship between the Seminar and the Master Plan is that the latter, together with the Action Plan, will be the key outputs of the consultancy commission.
- 3.4 The Seminar would be run by a facilitator, with skills in generating multi-agency consensus. It is envisaged that Council and HIE Moray officials would be actively involved in briefing the firm as to our requirements, in order to ensure added value.
- 3.5 The Seminar would be followed up with a report on the agreed outcomes, prepared by the facilitator, and circulated to all participants. This will form the basis of the consensus on which contributions to the consultancy commission can be based.

- 3.6 An agenda will be prepared after discussion with the appointed facilitator.
- 3.7 It is envisaged that invitations to the Seminar would be extended to six member organisations on the Community Planning Board, who would be represented at senior officer and respective board / elected member level. These are: The Moray Council, HIE Moray, Moray College, NHS Grampian, Grampian Fire and Rescue, and Grampian Police. The RAF/MOD would also be invited. (Moray Chamber of Commerce and MVSO would be involved subsequently during the preparation of the Brief).
- 3.8 It is envisaged that the Visioning Seminar could be organised for a day during August after the Council recess.
- 3.9 HIE Moray have agreed to procure and fund the services of the facilitator, and associated venue costs (approximately £5,000).

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the terms of this report are considered by the Community Planning Board.

Author of Report: David Duncan, Principal Planning Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: ADD/BDH