

MAIN ISSUES REPORT STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

DUMFRIES – REGIONAL CAPITAL

6 MAY 2011 BROWN HOUSE, CRICHTON, DUMFRIES

Name	Organisation
Bob Taylor	Taylor and Hardy
Ian Anderson	SNH
Andrew Davidson	Transport Scotland
Sandy Robson	Sandy Robson Homes
Alastair Ness	Macdonald Estates
Ian Bryden	NHS D&G
Laurence Wilson	Laurence T. Wilson Planning and Development
Gordon Mann	Crichton Development Company
Sam Cassels (break out group's facilitator)	Architecture and Design Scotland
Steve Rogers	Development Planning DGC
Andrew Maxwell	Development Planning DGC
Shona McCoy	Development Planning DGC
Carolyn Howarth	Development Planning DGC
Ewan Green	Economic Development DGC
Jim O'Neill	Strategic Housing DGC
Russell Wears	Strategic Transportation DGC

Acronyms used in the following text:

LTS: Local Transport Strategy

MIR : Main Issues Report

Russell Wears ended the main presentation by giving an update on the transport position. The LTS is currently in draft form, it will be issued for public consultation during the summer. There will also be a separate consultation, which begins in June, on a detailed package of measures for improvements to transport in Dumfries. There are 14 different interventions, the purpose of the consultation is to find out what weight people feel should be given to each of the interventions. Russell was keen to stress that it is a package of measures that is needed.

Prior to the workshop breaking up into two smaller break out groups Sam Cassels asked people to think about the following.

- How can the aspiration contained in the MIR be met?
- What is a regional capital and how can Dumfries aspire to that role?
- Is it maybe the case that Dumfries will not achieve that aspiration and that it should be supported by a hierarchy of smaller settlements?
- Is there a coherent vision for Dumfries?
- What is the role of planning in making things happen on the ground? A nice regional capital and a successful regional capital are not necessarily the same thing. Jobs are crucial if Dumfries is to become an economically successful place.

Question 1 for break out groups – What are the key things needed to make Dumfries a successful place?

Group 1

General accessibility, how accessible is Dumfries compared to other areas. Retail, the town centre needs to be improved.

Group 2

There needs to be something in Dumfries that people will want to come for, could include retail, education and employment opportunities. Good transport links and accessibility within Dumfries and in getting to Dumfries important. There is a perception that Dumfries is remote, that needs to be changed.

Dumfries as a destination – what elements are needed to attract people from outwith the region?

Delivery of the Scottish Sustainable Communities Initiative at Ladyfield as a flagship development of national significance could attract people to live and work in development or to visit it.

Should we try and make Dumfries a destination for a number of groups such as students, investors, tourists, retailers or focus on one group?

Culture is an important element that could help make Dumfries a destination. There are a number of pre-existing strengths that could be built on.

Is the identification of sites for housing and employment a crucial element?

How important is housing in creating a successful Dumfries? House building can play an important role in the local economy not just through building them and all the associated trades people that employs but in people purchasing and furnishing their property.

Health

People have to go outwith the region for specialised health care. If D&G was not such a rural region Dumfries might not have a district general hospital. D&G is not known for providing specialised health care that people would specifically come to the region for. Despite that there is good health care provided for the residents of the region.

There are no real health research and development opportunities. The universities are trying to build on the research side if things.

Development of the Crichton quarter needs to be done in such a way that it supports the town centre.

What are the main problems with planning in the region?

The Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers are giving out the message that they are assisting developers and that they want them to develop and put in planning applications. The nature of planning obligations and Section 75 agreements have changed, more geared towards the private sector.

Changes in the commercial market tend to be out of step with the production of development plans. The planning system is reactive. If a private developer wants to come forward quickly to capitalise on the market it's not always matched by the planning system.

The LDP needs to have a very clear vision especially if it's going against a proven demand or particular development proposal.

Statutory processes do not enable a plan to be produced and adopted quickly.

The planning system is reactive and not proactive.

Developers want flexibility and certainty – can you have both? There are 2 types of certainty, sites can be identified on a plan or criteria based policies can also give certainty although it's acknowledged that these can be less certain than identifying a site on a plan.

In the next 5-10 years the economy is not predicted to grow by very much. Need to have plans which make doing the right thing easy.

What can we do about access that will change people's perceptions about how accessible D&G is? The LDP needs to emphasise accessibility to central Scotland and the north of England. Connectivity and linkages to the A74 (M) need to be improved especially if people are looking to invest and set up business in the region. The transportation of goods and materials is a key consideration.

What should be in the plan that currently isn't? What should be left out?

Group 1

The proposed plan needs to have a clear vision / vision statement. It should also contain an overall strategy. Traffic and access – internal routes need to be addressed rather than looking at a southern bypass. Sustainability issues – bus routes need to be more accessible, linkages to Lockerbie train station. Cultural destination – need to develop something that will create spend.

Group 2

The proposed plan needs to be more honest about what it wants. Can you have both Dumfries and the A74(M) corridor as the main locations for investment? Is D&G big enough to sustain Dumfries as a regional capital? Should we be putting all of our eggs in the one basket? Should we be spreading that type of proposal about?

Health is a large area that has been missed. 80% of health is to do with what we do and how we live. The impact of place and where we live makes an important contribution, need to create healthy communities – think about the origins of town planning.