## INTRODUCTION

This workshop session, facilitated by forum members, encouraged debate about how different places in Scotland are approaching the development planning process. Participants shared their experiences of what had been working well, what could be working better and began draw out learning about key opportunities for design influence and input in the process.

Participants gathered in three groups around sketch diagrams of key stages in the process (FIG 1). Everyone was invited to indicate points they engaged in the process and encouraged to discuss and note arising thoughts and issues about the role of design in the process directly onto the diagram. The notes from the group exercises are consolidated in the following report.

## WHAT WORKS WELL?

**Comments noted under pre-MIR / MIR Report**

- Opportunity to influence…"Key stage for getting involved. (Pre-MIR)
- "This is the time for visioning and options"
- Charrettes. (For specific neighbourhoods?)
- People prefer photo's! Aerial photos had worked better for public engagement than maps / plans for one authority.
- Time, space and resources. Eg: One authority spent 1 year at pre-MIR stage, using charrettes and workshops to identify priorities. Value was created from this level of pre-MIR engagement
- Beyond the usual suspects…opportunities to reach different people through social media – monitoring needed for twitter / facebook. One LA had sent neighbour notifications at MIR report stage to get engagement.
- Collaboration needed with agencies at this stage

**Comments noted under Proposed Plan Phase**

- Realistic timeframes and the confidence to know when you've done enough.
- A draft Proposed Plan had flushed out negative comments for one authority.
- New sites at this stage means re-consultation, so high early engagement can pay dividends.

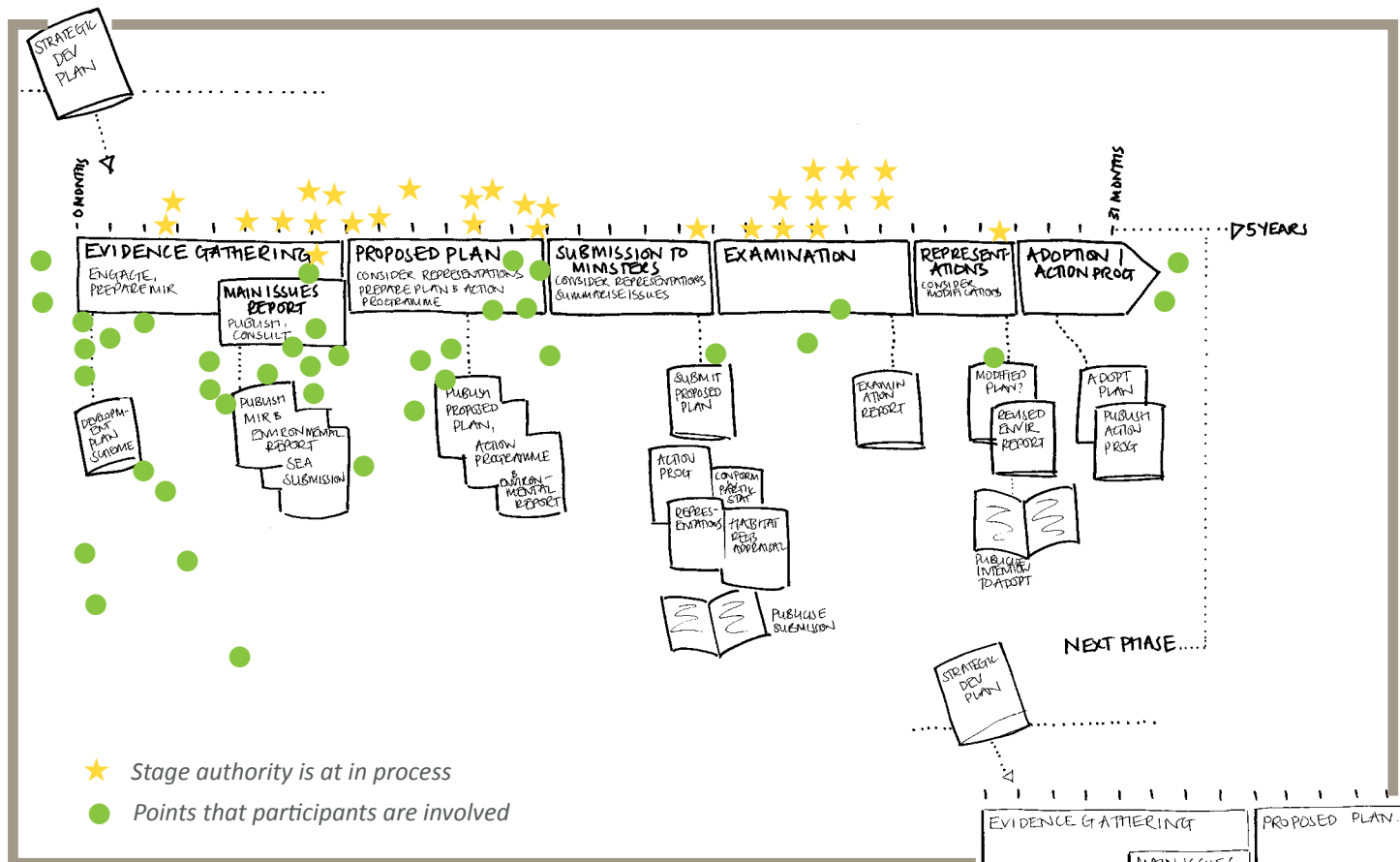**Comments noted under adoption / action programme**

- Next time round the level of engagement will improve as more people are familiar with the process.
- Highland wide development plan – an exception based on unusual geography? Area + 3 development plans

## WHAT COULD WORK BETTER?

**Comments noted under pre-MIR / MIR Report phase**

- Transition between the planning acts. Consultants holding back?
- Early engagement needs to be public-friendly. Thinking needed about right level of information/debate at this point – general discussion points or actual spatial strategy. Needs to be enough to engage public imagination / discussion.
- Reaching out to young people. "Need to be 25 before you know what (a local plan) is" Display more prominently online. Libraries. 1 stop shops.
- Issues with managing expectations (relating to engagement at early phases).
- Restrictions relating to standard / model processes eg: IDOX templates
- Development plan schemes as a tool for project management / engagement? Communicate the 5 year timeframes and points for influence / engagement to people (public and stakeholders)
- "Need to get better at visioning"." Too strategic"." Seen as facilitators not planners. Reacting rather than planning."
- Conflicts can arise at this stage where there are vested interests in particular sites.
- There are conflicts with the community planning engagement. Confusion for the public.
- "MIR phase can be just a process that's run through, not celebrated or addressed well." "Need to amplify the MIR phase."
- Role for charrettes / visioning and options and a place-based emphasis at pre-MIR stage.
- Resources – time intensive. Developer led charrettes.
- Call for sites and site assessment (design input?)
- Want to be involved! (How collaborative is this phase between departments within LA's?)

# THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS



★ *Stage authority is at in process*

● *Points that participants are involved*

**Comments noted under Proposed Plan Phase**

- Managing expectations for changes. "Feeling that public are locked out after proposed plan". "Seems like it can still be changed". "Public still think there is time / ability to change. And elected members"

- Additional consultations necessary for sites not identified at MIR

- Language used. "Jargon / buzzwords = confusion". Wording not great.

- The bigger picture "Not effectively communicating…not just about land allocation"

- Regarding Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)…"don't leave too late (it) influences design"

- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). Concern that SPG (and associated charrettes) synchronise with proposed Local Development Plans (LDPs).

**Comments noted under submission to Ministers**

- Masterplans happening too late
- Local Authority Resources
- Difficult to get input here

**Comments noted under Examination phase**

- LDPs physically cover too large an area
- Inadequate resources
- Reporters give objectors short shrift when they try to introduce new info
- SPG. Concern that SPG (and associated charrettes) synchronise with proposed LDP.

- "Still people want to get involved but can't"
- (Re hearings) "those involved did seem to prefer the hearing process"

**Comments noted under adoption / action programme**

- Out of date! (5 years on)

## DESIGN INFLUENCE

Some key issues, that might help inform the next generation of development plans highlighted by the discussions included:

- A clearer understanding and articulation of the relevance of strategic design issues would be helpful in communicating the importance of local plans to peoples lives

- Visioning processes (such as charrettes) and the use of appropriate graphics can help people to understand and engage with design issues at more strategic scales

- Value can be created by front-loading the process - focussing on the pre-MIR stage where opportunities for influence are strongest, and opportunities for design as a means of problem solving can have real impact

- Local plans are a tool to drive the delivery of better urban design, better quality outcomes and ultimately better places for people to live their lives in

- There is the potential for development plans and action plans to act as delivery plans

- There is opportunity to improve understanding of how the design of places works for people by monitoring built outcomes.