

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 4 FEBRUARY 2009**

### **NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTLAND 2**

#### **Report by Executive Director of Corporate Support**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the extent to which the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework for Scotland 2: Proposed Framework has taken on board representations made by the Council in relation to the Discussion Draft version of the document published in January 2008.

#### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 In April 2004 the Scottish Executive published its first National Planning Framework for Scotland, setting out a strategy for Scotland's development to 2025, providing a national context for development plans and planning decisions and helping to inform the wider programmes of government, public agencies and local authorities. The Scottish Government subsequently produced, in January 2008, a discussion draft of its second National Planning Framework, a report on which was presented to Cabinet for consideration on 23 April 2008 which detailed a number of concerns regarding the content of the document as far as it relates to Ayrshire. At that meeting, Cabinet agreed to approve the contents of the report and to authorise the Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Support to send a copy of the report to the Scottish Government as representing the Council's views on the document. This report will examine whether the Council's previous comments and concerns have been taken on board in the production of this Proposed Framework.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government published the National Planning Framework 2 – Proposed Framework on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and this has now been laid before the Scottish Parliament by Scottish Ministers. Parliament will require to debate the framework before the end of February. It is understood that three parliamentary committees will consider NPF2. The Local Government and Communities Committee will consider the document within the context of planning issues; the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee will look at transport, infrastructure and climate change aspects, with the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee focussing on economic development and energy matters. Under the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, the Scottish Ministers are required to have regard to any report made by the Parliament before NPF2 is finalised.

#### **3. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 2**

- 3.1 National Planning Framework 2 (NPF2) will, once finalised, provide the strategic spatial policy context for decisions by the Government and its agencies, complementing the statements of national planning policy set out in the Scottish Planning Policy series. Planning Authorities will be required to take the Framework

into account in preparing development plans and it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

- 3.2 The Framework has a strong outward focus, addressing the major challenges facing Scotland in terms of global competition, climate change and resource depletion. The document describes Scotland as it was in 2008 and identifies key issues and drivers of change, setting out a vision for the country to 2030. It also identifies priorities and opportunities for different parts of the country comprising the Central Belt, East Coast, the Highlands and Islands, Ayrshire and the South West and the South of Scotland. In addition, the Framework focuses strongly on priorities for the improvement of infrastructure to support Scotland's long term development with particular emphasis being placed on transport infrastructure, energy infrastructure, water and drainage, waste management, flooding and resource management and communications technology. In this regard, the Framework identifies a number of major transport, energy and environmental infrastructure projects which Ministers consider to be essential elements of the strategy for Scotland's long term development.

#### 4. ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS COMMENT

- 4.1 The Cabinet report of 23 April 2008 formed the Council's response to NPF2: Discussion Draft and contained a number of general observations setting out the concerns of the Council. The table below details these points and adjacent to each of these is the government response contained in the Proposed Framework.

<b>East Ayrshire Council comment on the discussion draft published in January 2008</b>	<b>Government response in Proposed Framework published in December 2008</b>
<p><b><u>National Developments</u></b>  Prestwick Airport expansion should be specifically designated as national development in the framework</p> <p>The need for the proposed transshipment centre at Hunterston should be included as a national development.</p>	<p><b><u>Prestwick</u></b> – recognised as a national development, elements covered by the designation include rail and bus interchange, improvements to terminal facilities and changes in operational area; additional freight and aircraft maintenance facilities; additional aircraft stands and taxiing facilities; and new car parking provision.</p> <p><b><u>Hunterston-</u></b> The transshipment centre has been recognised as a national development.</p> <p>In addition other elements sought by Clydeport/Peel Holdings covered by the designation include: carbon capture ready coal fired power station and fuel storage, biomass/gas fired power station, maritime construction and decommissioning yard, downstream industrial processes, associated environmental works.</p>
<p><b><u>Ayrshire Profile in NPF2</u></b>  The recognition previously given to Ayrshire in National Planning Framework 1, through the</p>	<p>The profile of Ayrshire is greatly enhanced in the proposed framework. The central Scotland Corridor has been extended into</p>

<p>identification of the Central Ayrshire Economic Development Zone has not been followed through or reflected in NPF2. Given the complexities involved in regenerating Ayrshire, which is recognised in the framework, consideration should be given to designating the Core Area, as identified in the recently approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and comprising the three towns of Kilmarnock, Ayr and Irvine, as an Area of Co-ordinated Action.</p>	<p>Ayrshire and the central part of Ayrshire is recognised as an area within which co-ordinated action and planning is necessary. This enhanced profile of Ayrshire alleviates many of the original concerns raised. The recognition of strategic concentration of economic activity in central Ayrshire, the need for investment to support regeneration through infrastructure investment as well as the need for co-ordinated action and planning of the core area should help improve the regional balance of national resources to Ayrshire</p>
<p>Although it is recognised that the strategic transport corridors between Ireland and the continent require to be strengthened, no specific mention is made of the need to improve Ayrshire's links with the M74 and the South. Bearing in mind Ayrshire's strong connectivity with Ireland, it is considered imperative that onward links from Ayrshire to the rest of the country are developed in the national interest, in order to help deliver the stated aims of the NPF development strategy.</p>	<p>The issue of improving Ayrshire's links with the M74 and the south has not been addressed in the Proposed Framework. (see Conclusion Section 5.1)</p>
<p><b><u>Renewable Energy and Grid Connection</u></b></p> <p>The current statement of need for a new South West Scotland Line as a national development in NPF2 is premature until the various wind farm developments in the area have received consent. An upgrade of the Coylton/Auchencroish line would be supportive of the approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and should be recognised as beneficial to the release of long term renewable capacity in the area. NPF2 needs clarity on the long term needs for transmission lines throughout SW Scotland to give clarity to future development.</p>	<p>A new South West Scotland transmission line has been included in NPF2 However, the inclusion in paragraph 226 that the new South West Scotland transmission line will ensure that acceptable wind farm development within the broad areas of search identified in development plans is not constrained by grid capacity is welcomed.</p> <p>Also welcomed is paragraph 156 which also states a presumption in favour of adequate grid connection for areas which planning authorities identify as preferred areas for renewable energy development</p>
<p><b><u>Small Towns and Sustainable Communities</u></b></p> <p>NPF2 needs to provide more support in the action programme section to the importance of small towns as well as to the development</p>	<p>The section on the Action Programme is much reduced in the Proposed Framework and gives no detail on which subjects it will cover. The Action Programme will form part</p>

<p>of sustainable communities.</p> <p>In the previous National Planning Framework, NPF1, it was recognised that the environmental quality of the former mining areas of East Ayrshire required improvement and this national recognition was depicted on the strategy map. This designation has been removed from NPF2 and it is recommended that this particular provision should be reinstated in the document.</p>	<p>of the final NPF2.</p> <p>To ensure effective delivery, the NPF will be supported by an Action Programme setting out how key elements of the NPF strategy will be implemented. The role of “small towns” in the fabric of Scotland is not recognised in the Development Strategy, though there is a recognition in the section on Ayrshire and the South-West of the need for improvement to environmental quality in the former mining areas of East Ayrshire and to promote regeneration and economic diversification in small towns.</p>
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## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The publication of NPF2: Proposed Framework is a significant improvement from the discussion draft issued in January 2008 as most of the key issues raised by the Council have been incorporated into NPF2. The document is therefore welcomed as a significant contribution to the future spatial planning of Scotland and Ayrshire. However, there is concern regarding the omission of the need to improve the links between Ayrshire and the M74, and thereon to the wider Scotland and UK markets. It is recognized that the extension of the M74 and the proposed upgrading of Raith interchange will improve links and journey times for traffic from the north of Ayrshire. This however does not address the connections from the south part of Ayrshire to the M74. Joint-working is being undertaken with East Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and South Lanarkshire to identify a package of improvements to the A70 relating to safety and reliability of journey times to facilitate economic regeneration and tourism in the south part of the area.
- 5.2 The Roads and Transportation allocation within the Council’s Draft Capital Plan allows for a programme of improvements to strategic routes, including the A70 over the 10 year period of the Plan. A motion has been raised in the Scottish Parliament requesting that the A70 is upgraded to Trunk Road status.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council as a result of the Framework.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications for the Council as a result of the Framework.

## 8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no policy implications for the Council as a result of the Framework.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no community plan implications for the Council as a result of the Framework.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1 It is recommended that the Council agrees:**

- (i) to approve the contents of the report;**
- (ii) to authorise the Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Support to send a copy of this report to the Scottish Government as representing the Council's views on the National Planning Framework for Scotland 2: Proposed Framework.**
- (iii) that the Council continues to lobby for NPF2 to include recognition of the need for improved transport links between the south of Ayrshire and the M74.**

**Elizabeth Morton**  
**Depute Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Support**

29 January 2009 (FV) (EF/EF)

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. National Planning Framework for Scotland 2: Discussion Draft – January 2008
2. Cabinet Report – National Planning Framework for Scotland 2: Discussion Draft – 23 April 2008
3. National Planning Framework for Scotland 2: Proposed Framework

Anyone wishing to inspect the above papers please contact Emma Fyvie on (01563) 576756.

***Implementation Officer: Alan Neish***