

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 24 AUGUST 2004

EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN: DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MONITORING REPORT

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To present to Committee, for information and approval, a Monitoring Report which measures development activity within East Ayrshire over the period 01 March 2001 to 31 March 2004.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 11 April 2003, East Ayrshire Council formally adopted the East Ayrshire Local Plan which provides full statutory local plan coverage for the whole of the local authority area.
- 2.2 A year has elapsed since the adoption of the local plan and it is considered appropriate to monitor the performance of the plan over this period. However, to give a more complete picture of the plan's performance, the monitoring period also includes the previous two year period during which the finalised version of the local plan with modifications was used by the Council as a basis against which planning proposals were assessed.
- 2.3 The development activity monitoring exercise that has been carried out is seen as an essential pre-requisite to the local plan alteration as it identifies what has been happening in development terms on the ground. However it should be noted that an assessment of the impact that this development has had on the quality of life of residents of East Ayrshire requires to be completed. In addition the alteration of the local plan, which the Committee agreed to undertake at its meeting of 4 May 2004, would also involve assessment of a wide range of planning related issues over and above those investigated as part of this particular exercise.

3. DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY REPORT: OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The principal objectives of the development activity monitoring exercise are:
- (i) to measure the amount of development activity in East Ayrshire;
 - (ii) to measure the degree to which Council decisions in relation to planning applications are being taken in line with the local plan development strategies;
 - (iii) the degree of take up of sites identified in the plan; and
 - (iv) the degree to which local plan proposals have been implemented.

3.2 The development activity information contained in the report will provide the basis for an assessment to be made of the effectiveness of the local plan strategies at a topic level.

4. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MONITORING EXERCISE

4.1 The monitoring exercise has revealed that, in the period 01 March 2001 to 31 March 2004, a total of 2553 planning applications were decided by the Council as planning authority. Analysis of these application decisions has revealed the following:

- (i) a total of 2423 applications were approved with only 130 refused. This represents an approval rate of 95%.
- (ii) of the 2553 applications determined, only 76 decisions (3%) were at variance with local plan policy, these decisions having also taken into account other material considerations. This represents a 97% compliance rate with the provisions of the plan.
- (iii) 88% of all applications received related to development in the area settlements with 12% relating to the rural area.
- (iv) of the 2553 applications determined, 1781 (70%) related to housing or household related applications. Of these 1781 applications, 1698 (95%) were approved.
- (v) of the 118 Housing Development Opportunity Sites identified in the local plan, 33 have been developed, 11 are under construction and 41 have obtained, or are in the process of obtaining, planning consent. This represents a take up rate of 72%. 11 (41%) of the 27 Miscellaneous Development Opportunity sites identified in the plan as being suitable for housing development have also obtained, or are in the process of obtaining, planning consent for residential use.
- (vi) 97.2% of all business and industry related application decisions were made in line with the local plan development strategy, with 92.4% of all such applications being approved.

5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MONITORING EXERCISE

5.1 It is considered that the following main conclusions can be drawn from the monitoring exercise although a more detailed assessment of the impact that local plan policy has had on the achievement of the Council's aims contained in the local plan will still be required:

- (i) the 95% approval rate for all applications determined during the monitoring period illustrates and re-enforces the Council's positive attitude to development throughout East Ayrshire;
- (ii) the high degree of compliance between decisions taken by the Council and the provisions of the local plan (97%) provides certainty for the development industry;

- (iii) the low level of application decisions (12%) relating to rural areas illustrates a broad degree of compliance with the local plan strategy to locate all new developments within existing settlements;
- (iv) approval of 17 of the 18 business and industry applications relating to the rural area (94%) demonstrates the Council's encouragement of the diversification of the rural economy, in line with local plan strategy;
- (v) the high degree of take up of identified housing and miscellaneous sites for residential purposes illustrates the buoyancy of the East Ayrshire housing market and indicates that the local plan has been extremely successful in its identification of effective housing sites to meet housing demand. The rapid take up of sites, so early in the life of the plan, also confirms the need for an early review of the plan to ensure that sufficient housing land is identified to meet future medium and long term needs;
- (vi) Kilmarnock is demonstrated to be the main focus for new business and industrial development, for new retail and town centre development, and for new large and medium scale housing development. This is in complete accord with the local plan development strategies relating to these particular matters.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications for the Council as a result of the report.

7. LEGAL / AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct legal or authority implications for the Council as a result of the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct personnel implications for the Council as a result of the consultation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

- (i) to approve the contents of this report; and
- (ii) to authorise the Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards to address any issues arising from the development activity monitoring exercise as part of the ongoing process to alter the East Ayrshire Local Plan, as considered appropriate.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
6 August 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

(i) East Ayrshire Local Plan: Monitoring Report

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