

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 14 DECEMBER 2004

EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS PAPER

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Committee for information and approval, the East Ayrshire Local Plan: Spatial Development Options Paper and to seek authorisation from the Committee to advertise the Options Paper for consultation purposes.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting of 24 August 2004, the Development Services Committee considered a report entitled 'East Ayrshire Local Plan: Alteration Process' and agreed to authorise the Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards to prepare a Spatial Development Options Paper through which a robust and defensible spatial strategy for the future development of East Ayrshire can be achieved. It was also agreed that the Options Paper should be considered by Committee following presentation of the Paper to local members at a series of informal seminars. These informal seminars were held during October and November 2004.
- 2.2 The Options Paper is now placed before Committee for consideration and approval, as previously agreed. Two copies of the full Spatial Development Options Paper have been placed in the Members' Lounge for information purposes.

3. THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS PAPER

- 3.1 The Spatial Development Options Paper has been produced in two distinct parts, Part 1 identifies a series of possible options for the future direction of growth throughout the East Ayrshire Communities, focusing on the major strategic issues and areas of change to be addressed in the agreed Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan. These comprise the issues of strategic housing development, business and industry, and retailing / town centre activities. Part 2 of the Paper suggests a possible approach to implementing a Strategic Environmental Assessment / sustainability appraisal of the options identified in Part 1, in line with the Scottish Executive's recently introduced Interim Planning Advice on Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 3.2 The Options Paper is firmly placed within the context of:
 - the National Planning Framework for Scotland;
 - the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan;
 - the Ayrshire Economic Forum's Strategy for Economic Development;
 - the Council's Community Plan; and
 - the Adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan and its associated Development Activity Monitoring Report.

- 3.3 The main options proposed for each of the issues addressed in the Options Paper are outlined in the Executive Summary attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 On approval by Council, it is intended that the Options Paper should be circulated to all national and local organisations with a recognised interest in the future development of East Ayrshire, for information and comment. The paper will also be drawn to the attention of the general public and other interested parties through advertisement in the local press and on the Council's web page. Consultees and other respondents to the paper will, in particular, be requested to respond to the questions posed in Part 1 of the consultation paper regarding the specific options for the future direction of development and to provide a reasoned justification for their views. Respondents will also be invited to bear in mind the assessment criteria and approach contained within Part 2 of the Options Paper, dealing with the environmental and socio-economic appraisal of the options. It is intended that a stipulated period of 8 weeks be set aside for any comments and observations on the document to be lodged with the Council for consideration.
- 4.2 It should be noted that Part 2 has not been prepared to meet the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004. An environmental report, in accord with the regulations, will be prepared in parallel with the consultative draft version of the local plan alteration (See Paragraph 4.6 below).
- 4.3 Having considered all comments and observations received in the consultation period, it is intended that the Council should determine which of the spatial development options presented in the paper should be adopted as a basis for future development throughout the area. A report on this matter will be placed before the Council for consideration and, thereafter, the chosen spatial strategy will be adopted and incorporated in the ongoing review of the East Ayrshire Local Plan, which the Options Paper has been specifically designed to inform.
- 4.4 At its meeting of 4 May 2004 the Development Services Committee considered a report entitled 'Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan' and agreed that the expedited local plan preparation procedures should be adopted. However, on 20 July 2004 the Scottish Executive issued Circular 2/2004 entitled 'Strategic Environmental Assessment for Development Planning' and brought into force the 'Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004'. These regulations make it clear that a local plan, if it has not been adopted before 21 July 2006, must be made subject to an environmental assessment in accordance with Part 3 of the Regulations. It is considered unlikely, even if the expedited procedures previously agreed by the Council were to be adopted in the plan preparation process, that the Council could complete all the necessary procedural stages to achieve adoption of the altered plan by 21 July 2006. Accordingly, the local plan alteration process, currently underway, must satisfy the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

- 4.5 However paragraph 27 of Circular 2/2004 states the following, "...it is considered doubtful that the use of the expedited procedure will enable planning authorities to comply fully with the requirements in the [Environmental Assessment] Regulations for an 'early and effective' consultation process which enables opinions on a plan to be taken into account. For this reason it is not recommended that the expedited procedures should be used where SEA is required."
- 4.6 Further advice has been taken on the above and it is considered, in the light of this advice, that in order to avoid the possibility of a Direction by Scottish Ministers relative to the Environmental Assessment Regulations, legal challenge by objectors to the local plan and a protracted public local inquiry, that the full publicity and consultation process should be adopted. Under this process, a consultative draft plan and draft environmental report will be produced to allow 'early and effective' consultation. Comments received at the consultative draft plan stage will be considered and incorporated, as appropriate, into a revised finalised or deposit plan. Objection to the finalised or deposit plan will then be invited through public consultation. The finalised plan will be accompanied by a finalised environmental report which, similarly, will incorporate any agreed adjustments following the receipt of comments.
- 4.7 The remaining steps to adoption under both the expedited procedure and full publicity and consultation procedure, following receipt of objections to the finalised plan, are the same. It should be noted that it is estimated that the full publicity and consultation procedures will add approximately 7-8 months to the local plan adoption timetable.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications for the Council as a direct result of the report.

6. LEGAL/AUTHORITY IMPLICATIONS

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

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 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 advertise and circulate the Options Paper for consultation purposes as detailed in section 4 above.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
26 November 2004
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- (i) Report to Development Services Committee dated 24 August 2004 entitled 'East Ayrshire Local Plan: Alteration Process'
- (ii) Report to Development Services Committee dated 4 May 2004 entitled 'Alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan'

Anyone wishing to inspect the above papers please contact John Lilley on (01563) 576754.

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish

APPENDIX 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

It is anticipated that East Ayrshire will face significant development pressure over the next 20 years and it is considered essential to produce a sound planning framework for the area in order to guide future development in the longer term. In this regard, the Council has prepared a Spatial Development Options Paper which explores the various directions in which the future strategic development of East Ayrshire could possibly take place. Part 1 of the Options Paper identifies a series of potential options through which future development could possibly be achieved. It is intended that each of these options will be appraised against a set of defined environmental, social and economic criteria. The methodology and description of the appraisal process are detailed in Part 2 of the document.

Part 1: Spatial Development Options

General Considerations

The Options Paper itself focuses the issues of housing, business and industry, and retailing and town centre uses.

Future Housing Land Requirements

The Options Paper has been prepared in the context of the Consultative Draft version of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan whose principal objective is to stabilise the Ayrshire population at current levels. The Structure Plan consequently seeks to make provision for an additional 12,667 houses in East Ayrshire in the period 2005 to 2025, some 9238 of which require to be accommodated on greenfield sites in appropriate locations. In terms of East Ayrshire, it is estimated that greenfield sites for a further 3234 houses will be required to meet demand in the period 2005 to 2012, with a further 2310 being required in the period 2012 to 2017. It is expected that the major part of this demand will require to be met within the Core Town of Kilmarnock with the bulk of the remainder being met within the Investment Corridor settlements identified in the Structure Plan itself.

Future Housing Options

The Options Paper identifies a number of potential options for the future development of Kilmarnock, other settlements in the Core Investment Area, service and other centres within and outwith the identified investment corridors, and rural communities. Three options have been identified in the Options Paper as having potential to meet the demand for housing within the core town of Kilmarnock and other settlements in the core investment area.

- Option 1 to release a single large area of land to meet all of Kilmarnock's housing needs to 2017;
- Option 2 to accommodate future demand for housing by spreading housing land release at a series of appropriate locations throughout the core area; and
- Option 3 to provide for new housing land release through a combination of the options 1 and 2 above.

With regard to settlements within Investment Corridors, the Options Paper proposes that the allocation of land for housing is carried out on a proportional basis, with the amount of housing land allocated being dependent of the ability of a particular settlement to accommodate a particular level of development. The same principle is also applied to other settlements outwith the core investment area and the identified investment corridors.

With regard to rural settlements, the Council aims to improve the local rural economy and help stem out migration, especially from rural areas already experiencing significant population decline. Three options are proposed in the Options Paper to address this issue.

- Option 1 to maintain the approach currently taken to address rural housing matters, as detailed in the adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan;
- Option 2 to relax the approach currently taken in the adopted Local Plan in order to allow more housing in the countryside; and
- Option 3 to strengthen the approach currently taken in the adopted Local Plan in order to further limit and restrict residential development in the countryside.

Future Business and Industry Options

The emerging Replacement Structure Plan has not identified any specific requirement for additional business and industrial land, over and above that already identified in the adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan. However, the following strategy relating to business and industry developments has been adopted in the Options Paper:

- (i) to confirm the existing sites at Meiklewood / Mosside, Rowallan and Moorfield in Kilmarnock and the Templeton Roundabout site at Auchinleck as strategic business and industrial locations;
- (ii) to identify any future strategic business and industrial sites as may be required at appropriate locations within Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Auchinleck, Galston and Stewarton; and
- (iii) to meet the demand for any local industrial sites as may be required in appropriate locations within the Core Investment Area and Investment Corridor settlements, the Service Centre of Dalmellington and the local communities of Patna and Dalrymple.

Future Town Centre and Retailing Options

It is considered imperative that the vitality and viability of existing town centres are sustained and improved. It is therefore suggested in the Options Paper that the following approach to general retail and town centre developments should be adopted:

- (i) to adopt a sequential approach to retailing and town centre activities; and
- (ii) to promote Kilmarnock, Cumnock, Auchinleck, Galston, Stewarton and Dalmellington as the preferred locations for major new retail and town centre investment.

It is considered that there are two options as to how future retail development within Kilmarnock could be achieved in spatial terms, these being:

- Option 1 to extend the town centre boundary of Kilmarnock, with specific retail development sites being identified within both the existing centre and the extended area; and
- Option 2 to keep the town centre of Kilmarnock to its existing boundaries and to identify specific sites within that boundary as being suitable for redevelopment purposes.

Part 2: Sustainability Appraisal

It is intended that each of the strategic spatial development options detailed in Part 1 of the Options Paper will be appraised against a set of defined environmental, social and economic criteria in order to assess the various impacts that their implementation may have on the areas concerned. The legislative and advice context for this appraisal comprise the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations and Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans.

The Regulations require only an environmental assessment of a development plan to be undertaken. However, it is considered that a full Sustainability Appraisal of the Options Paper, including an assessment of options against social and economic criteria as well as the prescribed environmental criteria, would be more appropriate in this particular case. A full sustainability appraisal of the options will, in particular, help:

- (i) assess the options paper in full environmental, social and economic terms;
- (ii) identify any potential significant adverse environmental, social and economic effects of the various options considered and allow these to be addressed at the earliest possible stage;
- (iii) assist in the identification and implementation of preferred strategic development options in spatial terms; and
- (iv) ensure that the Options Paper is fully compliant with the Environmental Assessment Regulations.

Comments received on the environmental, social and economic assessment of all the possible development options detailed in the Options Paper will be invaluable in helping inform the final spatial development strategy to be adopted in the emerging alteration to the East Ayrshire Local Plan.

The Assessment Process

The assessment process is based on the methodology and procedures detailed in the Scottish Executives Interim Planning Advice on the Environmental Assessment of Development Plans. Although addressing only the subject of environmental assessment, the processes and procedures detailed in the Advice are considered to apply equally to the broader based Sustainability Appraisal of the Options Paper.

The entire assessment process advocated in the Interim Planning Advice involves 14 key stages, the first 7 of which are particularly relevant to the assessment of the Options Paper. These stages are addressed and discussed in greater detail in the Options Paper itself. The remaining 7 stages of the assessment process relate to subsequent stages of plan production and are not directly relevant to the current exercise of appraising the Strategic Development Options Paper.

Identification of Assessment Objectives and Criteria

Following consultation on the Options Paper, all the various spatial development options proposed will be appraised against a series of environmental and socio - economic options and criteria set out in a simple matrix format. A total of 18 environmental objectives and 8 socio-economic objectives have been identified in the Options Paper, together with an associated 40 environmental and 18 socio-economic criteria. These objectives and criteria are detailed in full in the Options Paper itself. The assessment to be carried out will comprise an appraisal of the degree of compliance of each of the options proposed in the Paper with each of the objectives and criteria identified.

The Way Forward

On approval by the Council, the Options Paper will be circulated to all national and local organisations with a recognised interest in the future development of East Ayrshire and advertised for information and comment. Consultees and other respondents to the Paper will, in particular, be requested to respond to the questions posed in the consultation paper regarding the specific options for the future direction of development. Comments will also be invited on the various objectives and criteria to be used in the appraisal of the various options detailed in the Options Paper itself. It is intended that a stipulated minimum period of 8 weeks be set aside for any comments and observations on the document to be lodged with the Council for consideration. All comments and observations received will be give full consideration by the Council. A report on all representations received will then be placed before the Council for consideration and, thereafter, any chosen preferred spatial strategies will be adopted and incorporated in the ongoing review of the East Ayrshire Local Plan.