

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 28 JUNE 2005

GLASGOW AND THE CLYDE VALLEY 2025 STRUCTURE PLAN ALTERATION

CONSULTATIVE DRAFT STRUCTURE PLAN

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise and obtain the views of the Committee on the Consultative Draft version of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Alteration.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Committee has recently published, for consultation purposes, the consultative draft version of the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley 2005 Structure Plan Alteration which is intended to update the existing approved Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan 2000. Comments on the plan were requested by 21 June 2005 and, bearing in mind the date of this Committee, an extension to this deadline has been negotiated and agreed.

2.2 The Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Alteration sets out to stabilise population and to deliver significant economic growth in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley, as a means of contributing to the renaissance of Scotland. This approach closely reflects the approach taken by the three Ayrshire Councils in the preparation of the ongoing review of the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and the two structure plans, together, provide a consistent and united approach to future development in a wider west of Scotland context. The establishment of a common development framework for the West of Scotland, set against the National Planning Framework, is considered to be fully in line with Scottish Executive policy. The aims of stabilising population and delivering significant economic growth at a higher rate than the UK average, as proposed in the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley plan is therefore considered particularly worthy of support.

3. COMMENTS ON THE CONSULTATIVE DRAFT ALTERATION

3.1 The four key, interrelated aims of the Structure Plan Alteration of achieving economic growth, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and integrated land use and transportation are supported by the Council and the overall thrust of the plan is welcomed. Many of the broad aims, objectives and strategies promoted in the document are general in nature and do not impact directly on East Ayrshire. However, there are a number of issues addressed in the plan that have some cross boundary implications and the representations already made were limited, and

related specifically, to these particular issues. These representations are summarised in the following paragraphs.

(i) Transport

3.2 The Structure Plan Alteration recognises that gaps in external transport infrastructure exist and, in so far as Ayrshire is concerned, specifically mentions links to the port of Hunterston. One link which is of prime importance to East Ayrshire and which has been given no consideration in the Structure Plan Alteration is the Kilmarnock / Barrhead / Glasgow railway line. The need to improve this particular rail link between East Ayrshire and the conurbation requires to be recognised and addressed in the Structure Plan as a matter of priority.

(ii) Retail

3.3 There are significant concerns regarding the number and extent of recent retail proposals in the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley area, particularly at Pollok, which because of their proximity to East Ayrshire, could potentially be seriously detrimental to the vitality and viability of retailing within the East Ayrshire communities. Improvements to the M77 and improved access to Glasgow could considerably exacerbate the current, and already significant, loss of retail expenditure from East Ayrshire to the conurbation, especially if locations such as Pollok, identified as a 'Local Centre' are allowed to expand beyond the role at which a 'Local Centre' should function, i.e. a centre which meets the shopping requirements of the local population. Clarification of the future role of 'Local Centres' is therefore required and it is considered that the plan should clearly indicate the degree to which expansion of other centres in the conurbation is likely to occur as significant expansion of other town centres on the south side of Glasgow, to the degree as at Pollok, would undoubtedly exacerbate the loss of retail expenditure to the detriment of East Ayrshire communities.

(iii) Windfarms

3.4 The Structure Plan Alteration shows three potential areas of search for windfarms directly adjacent to the East Ayrshire boundary. With regard to the identification of a search area in the Whitelees Forest area, the boundaries for this area tie in well with the boundaries of the preferred commercial windfarm area identified for Whitelees Forest within East Ayrshire. However, the identification of a windfarm in the Whitelees area may require to be reassessed in light of aviation issues that have recently arisen, but, subject to these aviation issues being resolved, there are no objections to the identification of this particular search area in the Structure Plan.

3.5 Serious concerns are, however, expressed regarding the identification of the other two potential windfarm areas located to the north and south east of Muirkirk. Both of these areas are contiguous with the recently designated Muirkirk and Lowther Uplands Special Protection Area and it is considered that significant conflict

could occur between windfarm and nature conservation objectives in these particular areas. It would appear that identification of potential windfarm areas directly adjacent to an internationally recognised Natura 2000 site could well be inappropriate in planning terms. In addition, the identification of such large potential windfarm areas could have significant adverse effects on the landscape quality of the areas concerned and also on aviation interests. It is suggested that the identification of these areas as potential windfarm areas be revisited by the Structure Plan Committee as a matter of priority.

(iv) Forestry

3.6 There would appear to be some anomalies between the proposed forestry provisions of the Structure Plan Alteration with the provisions of the approved Ayrshire and Arran Woodland Strategy. In particular, some preferred and potential areas for forestry planting abut directly onto the sensitive area for forestry planting identified in the Ayrshire and Arran Woodland Strategy in the Muirkirk Uplands and Lowther Hills SSSI / SPA. It is therefore suggested that the introduction of Key Diagram Inset F into the Structure Plan should not take place unchanged, as is currently proposed, but that the provisions of the Ayrshire and Arran Woodland strategy be taken into account and the Key Diagram amended accordingly.

(v) Minerals

3.7 It does not appear that the issue of mineral extraction, including the issue of opencast coal extraction, is addressed in the Structure Plan Alteration. This issue has significant cross boundary implications, especially as regards the extraction of sand and gravel and hard rock and the adequacy or otherwise of existing and anticipated demand and supply, and it is considered that this matter should be given specific mention in the plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct personnel implications as a result of this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

- (i) to forward a copy of this report to the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan Joint Committee as representing the Councils formal views on the document; and**
- (ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.**

**James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services**

17 June 2005 (JL/SA)
FV-AN

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

(1) Glasgow and the Clyde Valley 2005 Structure Plan Alteration: Consultative Draft

For further information on this report contact John Lilley, Principal Planning Officer (Policy). Telephone 01563 576754.

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish