

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 28 JUNE 2005

EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

MONITORING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

01 APRIL 2004 TO 31 MARCH 2005

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 April 2004 to 31 March 2005.

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. On 24 August 2004, the Development Services Committee considered a Monitoring Development Activity Report prepared by the Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards which identified and assessed, in the context of the local plan, all development activity that had taken place throughout East Ayrshire between 01 March 2001 and 31 March 2004. At that meeting, it was agreed to approve the contents of the report and 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.

2.2 Work on preparing an alteration to the local plan is now well under way and the previously approved Monitoring Report has been an important consideration in the plan preparation process. A year has now elapsed since the preparation of this report and it is now considered appropriate to further monitor the performance of the plan over the subsequent 12 month period from 01 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. It is intended that this will give a more complete and up to date picture of development activity since the local plan was adopted by the Council as the basis for the assessment of all planning related proposals.

2.3 Copies of the Monitoring Development Opportunities Report for the period between 01 April 2004 and 31 March 2005 have been placed in the Members Lounge for the information of the Committee and Local Members.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY MONITORING EXERCISE

3.1 The principal objectives of the development activity monitoring exercise are:

- (i) to measure the amount of development activity in East Ayrshire over the 12 month monitoring period;
- (ii) to measure the degree to which Council decisions in relation to planning applications over the monitoring period have been taken in line with the local plan development strategies;
- (iii) the degree of take up of sites identified in the plan over the monitoring period; 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 April 2004 to 31 March 2005, a total of 946 planning applications were decided by the Council as planning authority. Analysis of these application decisions has revealed the following:

- (i) a total of 912 applications were approved with only 34 refused. This represents an approval rate of 96.4%, an increase of 1.4% over the approval rate of 95% for the previous monitoring period;
- (ii) of the 946 applications determined, only 18 decisions (1.9%) were at variance with local plan policy. This represents a 98.1% compliance rate with the provisions of the plan, an increase of 1.1% over the compliance rate of 97% for the previous monitoring period;
- (iii) 764 applications (80.8%) of all applications received related to development in the area settlements with 182 (19.2%) relating to the rural area. This represents a significant 7.2% increase in the proportion of rural area applications over the 12% figure for the previous monitoring period;
- (iv) of the 946 applications determined, 728 (77%) related to housing or household related applications, a significant increase of 7% in the proportion of housing or household related developments (70%) determined over the previous monitoring period. Of these 728 applications, 700 (96.1%) were approved, an increase of 1.1% over the approval rate of 95% for the previous monitoring period.
- (v) of the 118 Housing Development Opportunity Sites identified in the local plan, 33 have been developed (an increase of 4 sites over the monitoring period), 18 are under construction (an increase of 7) and 29 have obtained, or are in the process of obtaining, planning consent (a decrease of 12). This represents a take up rate of 71%. 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) 35 of the 36 business and industry related application decisions (97.2%) were made in line with the local plan development strategy, the same figure as the previous monitoring period. 97.2% of all such applications were approved, an increase of 4.8% over the 92.4% approval rate previously experienced.

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 increase in the approval rate for all applications determined during the monitoring period from 95% to 96.4% illustrates and re-enforces the Council's positive attitude to development throughout East Ayrshire;
- (ii) the increasingly high degree of compliance between decisions taken by the Council and the provisions of the local plan during the monitoring period, from 97% to 98.4%, continues to provide certainty for the development industry;
- (iii) the level of application decisions (19.2%) relating to rural areas illustrates a broad degree of compliance with the local plan strategy to locate all new developments within existing settlements. However, an increase in 7% of rural applications over the level identified in the previous monitoring period is indicative of an increasing demand for new development in the countryside;
- (iv) approval of all business and industry applications relating to the rural area 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 continuing take up of sites also supports the Council's decision to prepare an alteration to the adopted East Ayrshire Local 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

17 June 2005 (JL/SA)
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

(1) East Ayrshire Local Plan: Monitoring Development Activity Report.

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

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish