

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 4 MAY 2004

REPLACEMENT AYRSHIRE JOINT STRUCTURE PLAN: CONSULTATIVE DRAFT

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Committee for information and approval, the Consultative Draft version of the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and to seek the agreement of the Committee for the plan to go out to public consultation.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting on 26 March 2004, the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee considered a Consultation Draft version of the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan. At the Committee, it was agreed to approve the Consultation Draft and to submit it to the three Ayrshire Councils for their agreement for the document to go out to public consultation. It was further agreed to give authority to the Structure Plan Manager to make further textual changes as necessary and finalise any diagrams in conjunction with the Councils' officers.

3. SYNOPSIS OF THE CONTENTS OF THE CONSULTATION DRAFT

- 3.1 The Replacement Joint Structure Plan sets out a vision for Ayrshire in 2025 with a set of aspirations to achieve vibrant communities with a sustainable economy and a good quality of life. The plan itself is split into four sections:
- Section 1 which sets out the Context for the plan;
 - Section 2 which details the Spatial Development Strategy proposed to achieve the plan's stated aims and objectives;
 - Section 3 which deals with Investing in Communities; and
 - Section 4 which deals with Protection of the Environment issues.

The Spatial Development Strategy

- 3.2 In order to achieve its stated vision, the replacement Structure Plan has adopted a Spatial Development Strategy which has a primary aim of maintaining Ayrshire's population at or about current levels. The Strategy recognises that all parts of Ayrshire have a vital contribution to make to the area's future prosperity and quality of life and identifies a series of areas and communities as being appropriate for varying levels of development and investment. In particular, the strategy:

- (i) Highlights the importance of access to principal Gateway Locations that are the main arrival and departure points for Ayrshire Business. These locations comprise Glasgow Prestwick International Airport, Hunterston, the ports of Ayr and Troon. Although located outwith Ayrshire, the ports of Stranraer / Cairnryan and Glasgow Airport are also recognised as being of strategic importance to Ayrshire.
- (ii) aims to develop and strengthen existing transport, population, economic activity and service concentrations in a Core Investment Area, encompassing three identified Core Towns of Ayr, Kilmarnock and Irvine, and particularly in the Core Towns themselves.
- (iii) balances the spread of development across Ayrshire's communities, provide a focus for co-ordinated service and infrastructure provision and maximise opportunities for investment and development within a series of identified Investment Corridors. Three of the six Investment Corridors proposed lie with East Ayrshire, these being a Glasgow Link Corridor (including the settlements of Kilmaurs, Stewarton, Dunlop, Lugton and Fenwick), an Irvine Valley Corridor (including the settlements of Galston, Newmilns, Darvel and Priestland) and an A74 Link Corridor (including the settlements of Cumnock, Auchinleck, Mauchline, Catrine, Ochiltree, Drongan, New Cumnock, Muirkirk, Logan and Lugar).
- (iv) consolidates and strengthens a series of key towns as Service Centres for surrounding urban and rural communities in the Investment Corridors. Five Service Centres are identified within East Ayrshire, these being the settlements of Stewarton, Galston, Cumnock, Auchinleck and Dalmellington.
- (v) realises the potential for growth of a series of Local Communities located outwith the Core Investment Area through enhancement, protection and regeneration.
- (vi) creates new opportunities in rural areas to increase choice and quality of life by revitalising small towns, villages and rural communities and by encouraging appropriate development in the open countryside.

3.3 An essential component of the strategy is also to improve accessibility and links between the above locations and communities in order to strengthen internal movement within Ayrshire and improve links to opportunities elsewhere. Insofar as East Ayrshire is concerned, improved accessibility is proposed through:

- (i) the promotion of a dynamic loop on the Glasgow-Kilmarnock railway line;
- (ii) the provision of new rail passenger halts to link with new housing releases, where practicable;
- (iii) the provision of by-passes for Mauchline, Newmilns and Darvel; and
- (iv) the provision of a new east-west by-pass for Cumnock.

Investing in Communities

3.4 The Investing in Communities section of the plan identifies the need for an additional 25,000 houses throughout Ayrshire by 2025, over and above current allocations. Within East Ayrshire there is a requirement for up to 8000 additional new houses in North, West and South Kilmarnock. A further 1,200 is required for the Glasgow Link Investment Corridor, 1,600 for the M74 Link Corridor, 500 for the Irvine Valley Corridor and an additional 1,500 for various other communities in the Core Investment Area and the rural area. The plan does not specifically identify any particular requirements for additional industrial land release, retail floorspace or land for the release of future mineral reserves.

3.5 With regard to other matters, the plan identifies

- (i) a specific potential area for large scale wind farm development in the Whitelee Forest area;
- (ii) a search area for the large scale coppicing of wood for fuel and forest brash utilisation linked to a possible biomass or co-fired power plant;
- (iii) specific opportunities for the development of open access tourism are for the Galloway Forest Park, the Muirkirk Uplands and the Whitelees Forest areas; and
- (iv) locations associated with Robert Burns are also promoted as a World Heritage Site.

Protecting the Environment

3.6 The plan promotes care of the landscape equally to all areas. Greater emphasis is, however, given in the plan to protection of the landscape setting of communities and woodland planting around Kilmarnock is specifically promoted. The importance of good design is also stressed, as is the protection of heritage and natural habitats. In addition, specific consideration is given to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and it is proposed in this regard that a pilot exercise will be developed for the River Irvine above Kilmarnock.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 It is intended that, once approval of the Consultation Draft has been obtained from the three Ayrshire Councils, the Structure Plan Committee will initiate a formal consultation exercise involving key stakeholders and the community. This consultation process is expected to take a minimum of six to eight weeks. Thereafter, a finalised version of the plan will be prepared and, following approval by the three Councils, will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for consideration.

4.2 In order to assist the consultation process, the plan incorporates a total of 27 specific questions on which observations and comments are requested. The

plan has already been the subject of internal discussion and assessment by officers of the three Councils and seminars have previously been held with both Councillors and officials. However, it is considered that the Council will wish to make further specific comment on the questions posed as well as on other issues raised by the plan itself, during the formal consultation period. A further report will be presented to the Development Services Committee in this regard, in due course.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

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

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees:

- (i) to approve the release of the Consultation Draft of the Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan for consultation purposes; and**
- (ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.**

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services

26 April 2004 (JL/SA)
FV/AN

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Growing Ayrshire: Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan 2025: Consultation Draft

For further information on the contents of this report contact Alan Neish, Head of Planning and Building Control. Telephone 01563 576782.

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Replacement Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan Consultation DraftSA