

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 11 OCTOBER 2006**

**EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN**

**MONITORING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

**01 APRIL 2005 TO 31 MARCH 2006**

**Report by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to present to Committee, for information and approval, a monitoring report which measures development activity within East Ayrshire over the period 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2006.

**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. A subsequent Monitoring Report covering the 12 month period from 01 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 was considered and approved by the Committee at its meeting on 28 June 2005.

- 2.2** In order to provide the Committee with a more complete and up to date picture of development activity since the local plan was adopted as the basis for assessing all planning related proposals, a further Monitoring Report has now been produced, the report covering the period from 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2006. Copies of this latest Monitoring Development Activity Report 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 provides 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 2005 to 31 March 2006, a total of 924 planning applications were decided by the Council as planning authority. Analysis of these application decisions has revealed the following:

- (i) a total of 880 applications were approved with only 44 refused. This represents an approval rate of 95.2%, a decrease of 1.2% over the approval rate of 96.4% for the previous monitoring period;
- (ii) of the 924 applications determined, only 31 decisions (3.3%) were at variance with local plan policy. This represents a 96.7% compliance rate with the provisions of the plan, a decrease of 1.4% over the compliance rate of 98.1% for the previous monitoring period;
- (iii) 726 applications (78.6%) of all applications received related to development in the area settlements with 198 (21.4%) relating to the rural area. This represents a 2.2% increase in the proportion of rural area applications over the 19.2% figure for the previous monitoring period;
- (iv) of the 230 applications relating to the creation of new houses through new build or conversion, 74 (32.2%) related to housing developments in the countryside. This represents a 3.1% decrease in the proportion of rural housing application figure of 35.3% for the previous monitoring period.
- (v) of the 924 applications determined, 719 (77.8%) related to housing or household related applications, an increase of 0.8% in the proportion of housing or household related developments (77%) determined over the previous monitoring period. Of these 719 applications, 689 (95.8%) were approved, a decrease of 0.3% over the approval rate of 96.1% for the previous monitoring period.
- (vi) of the 118 Housing Development Opportunity Sites identified in the local plan, 52 have been developed (an increase of 15 sites over the monitoring period), 23 are under construction (an increase of 5) and 17 have obtained, or are in the process of obtaining, planning consent (a decrease of 12). This represents a take up rate of 78%, an increase of 7% over the previous monitoring period. 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.
- (vii) 26 of the 29 business and industry related application decisions (89.6%) were made in line with the local plan development strategy, a decrease of 7.6% from the previous monitoring period. 28 of the business and industry related applications (96.6%) were approved, a decrease of 0.6% over the 97.2% 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 95.2% approval rate for all applications 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 during the monitoring period (96.7%) continues to provide certainty for the development industry; however there is a recent increase in the number of applications for housing in the countryside which are approved contrary to the Development Plan;
- (iii) the level of application decisions relating to rural areas (21.4%) illustrates a broad degree of compliance with the local plan strategy to locate all new developments within existing settlements. However, an increase in 1.2% of rural applications over the level identified in the previous monitoring period is indicative of an increasing demand for rural diversification and appropriate economic and other related 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 early alteration to the adopted East Ayrshire Local Plan to ensure that sufficient housing land is identified timeously 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. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **8. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1** There are no direct Community Plan implications for the Council as a result of the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Agrees to approve the contents of this report; and
- (ii) Authorises 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 progress the approved consultative draft of the Alteration of the East Ayrshire Local Plan to adoption, as considered appropriate.

**James Lavery**  
**Executive Director of Development and Property Services**  
(JL/SA) - FV  
21 September 2006

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- (1) East Ayrshire Local Plan: Monitoring Development Activity Report: 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

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

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish, Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards