

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 23 OCTOBER 2001**

### **REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**

#### **Report by Director of Development Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to Committee for endorsement, subject to the comments below, a report approved by the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee in response to the Scottish Executive's Consultation Paper, Review of Strategic Planning, June 2001.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The consultation paper a Review of Strategic Planning, published in June 2001 is the latest in a series of papers examining the development planning system in Scotland. Full details of the background to the June 2001 consultation paper are provided in the Joint Ayrshire Structure Plan and Transportation Committee report. The full report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 This Committee agreed a report by the Director of Development Services in April 2001 that was prepared in response to a request by the Minister for Environment, Sport and Culture in November 2000 to provide comments in advance of the forthcoming review of strategic planning. The report outlined the case for continuing with structure planning at an Ayrshire level.
- 2.3 The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan and Transportation Committee at its meeting on 07 September 2001, considered and approved a very detailed report prepared by the Joint Ayrshire Structure Plan Manager on the Scottish Executive's consultation paper. The Joint Committee have requested each Ayrshire Council to endorse the report before it is forwarded to the Scottish Executive as a unified Ayrshire-wide response.

#### **3 PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The core proposal in the consultation report is that there should no longer be a requirement for comprehensive coverage by structure plans, but that strategic development plans would still be required for four 'city regions'. These would be complemented by a national spatial overview document. It is not clear from the consultation report if it is envisaged that Ayrshire should be included in the Glasgow 'city region'. But from presentations and consultation documents on

related issues by the Scottish Executive it would appear this may be being considered.

### 3.2 The Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan report includes the following key points:

- The Executive's proposals would result in a shift in planning policy from the local level towards central government

Comments: The proposals would remove influence over physical development from the local level to the national centre, in contradiction of declared government and European policy. This will be particularly damaging for planning since it will undermine the potential for effective public participation.

- A separate structure plan for Ayrshire is required to provide an over-arching framework for local plans, economic development strategies and transport plans.

Comments: A separate structure plan for Ayrshire is required to link key strategies relating to the economy, transport and social justice. The key agencies in relation to these are the local enterprise company, the local authorities through their local transport planning responsibilities, and the local authorities through their community planning responsibilities. In relation to economic development in particular strategic planning boundaries which relate to LEC boundaries have very significant merits as has been demonstrated in Ayrshire.

Ayrshire is a self-contained travel to work, housing and retail market area. The links with the Clydeside conurbation are limited.

- The proposals place undue emphasis on city regions.

Comments: 60% of Scotland's population live in towns which are neither cities nor rural areas. A regional planning framework based around city regions will focus attention on the problems of city centres and their peripheries and will fail to serve well 60% of Scotland's population.

National planning should aim to facilitate investment and build effective links between developments and communities. This requires policies to encourage investment in areas where it is in short supply and unemployment is high and reduce the pressure where it is causing major environmental and logistical problems. This is a declared planning objective of the government as set out in the Framework for Economic Development. The National spatial overview should reflect policies on these issues.

## 4. OTHER ISSUES

Other issues of concern relate to:

#### 4.1 **Streamlining Planning**

This review of Strategic Planning is introduced as a need to streamline and speed up the process of planning. The proposals do not address this issue. Without major legislative change involving a significant review of the many complex issues that the planning system is meant to tackle this will not be achieved (eg there are now 62 Planning Advice Notes and 19 National Planning Policy Guidelines that have to be taken into account).

#### 4.2 **Infrastructure Planning**

The ability of the planning system to deliver its objectives is being undermined by decisions on infrastructure that lie outwith the democratic process. Any proposal to centralise such decisions would further undermine the local democracy of the planning system.

#### 4.3 **Local Plans**

Outwith the 4 city regions the consultation paper suggests that there may be “circumstances where a strategic view might be required” and implies that this could be addressed in local plans. It is still considered that due to the proximity of the main towns in Ayrshire such strategic matters should be addressed by an Ayrshire Structure Plan. It is also recommended that structure plans and local plans should have a longer time horizon with a clear review timetable.

#### 4.4 **Specialist Issues**

The proposal that there should be a Waste Subject Plan aligned with the Area Waste Plan is not supported as the boundaries of the Area Waste Plan chosen by the Scottish Executive do not correspond to the administrative responsibilities of the respective authorities.

### 5. **LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal, financial or policy implications that arise directly from this report. However the decisions that the Scottish Executive make following the consultation period may well have significant legal, policy and potentially financial implications for the Council. Until these decisions are taken and communicated to Councils it would not be appropriate to speculate what the full implications may be.

### 6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 it is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) approve the contents of this report;
- (b) endorse the report approved by the Joint Ayrshire Structure Plan and Transportation Committee subject to the comments contained in this report; and
- (c) authorise the Head of Planning and Building Control to forward a copy of this and the attached report (Appendix 1) to The Scottish Executive; COSLA and the Minister for Planning and Transport.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**

17 October 2001  
(SC/JR/KD/MMM)  
FV/AN

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Report by the Director of Development Services to 24 April 2001 Development Services Committee, A Review of Strategic Planning in Scotland.
2. Report by the Director of Development Services to 28 August 2001 Development Services Committee, The National Waste Strategy, Area Waste Plans and Development Planning.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above papers please contact Karl Doroszenko on 01563 576751.

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**AGENDA**